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NO. 33

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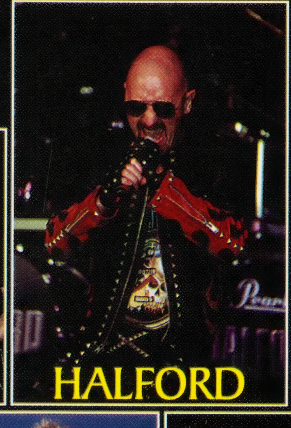

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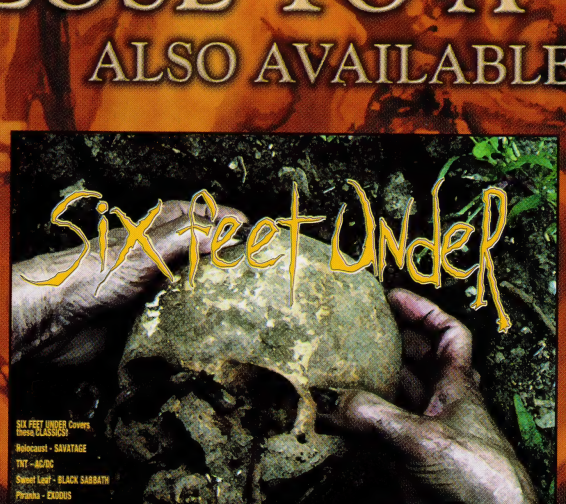
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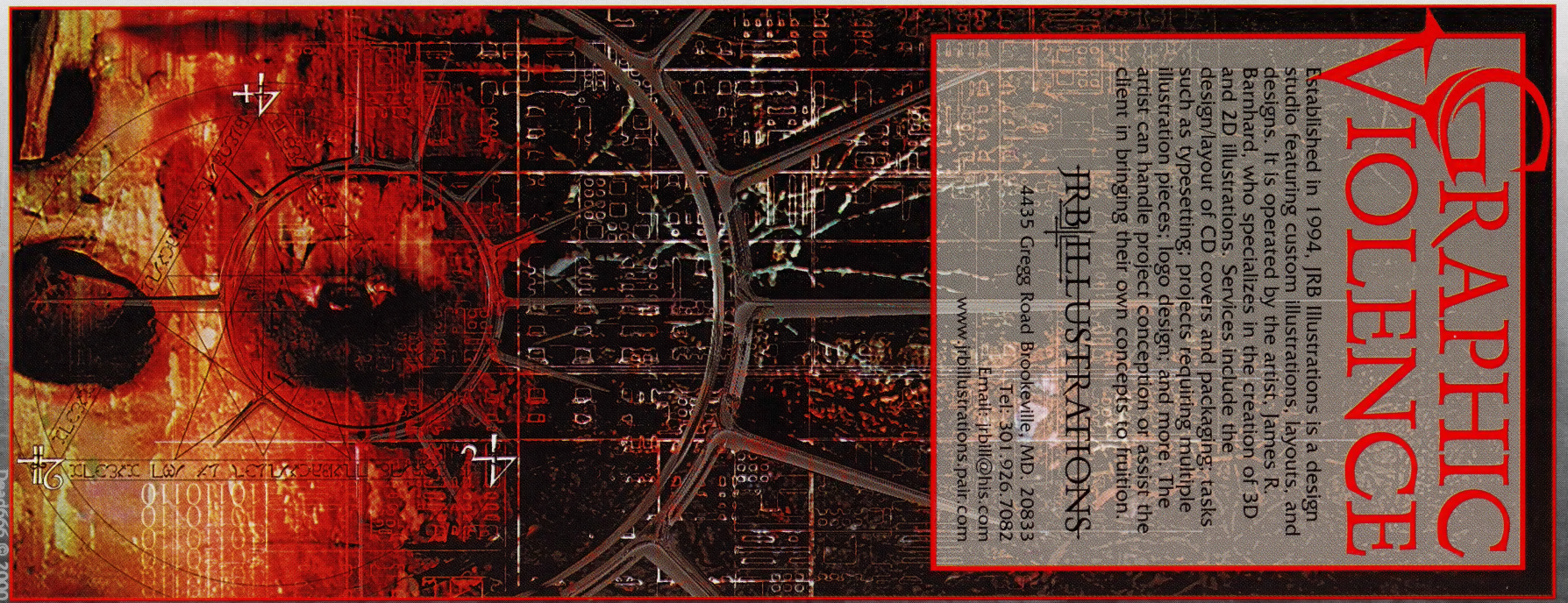

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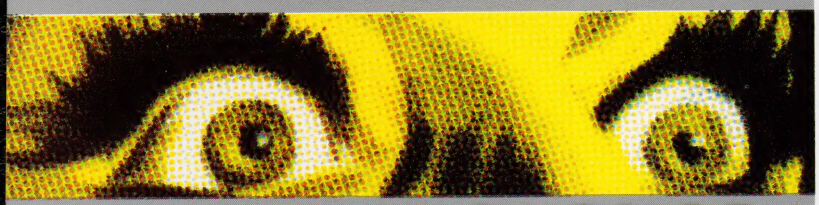

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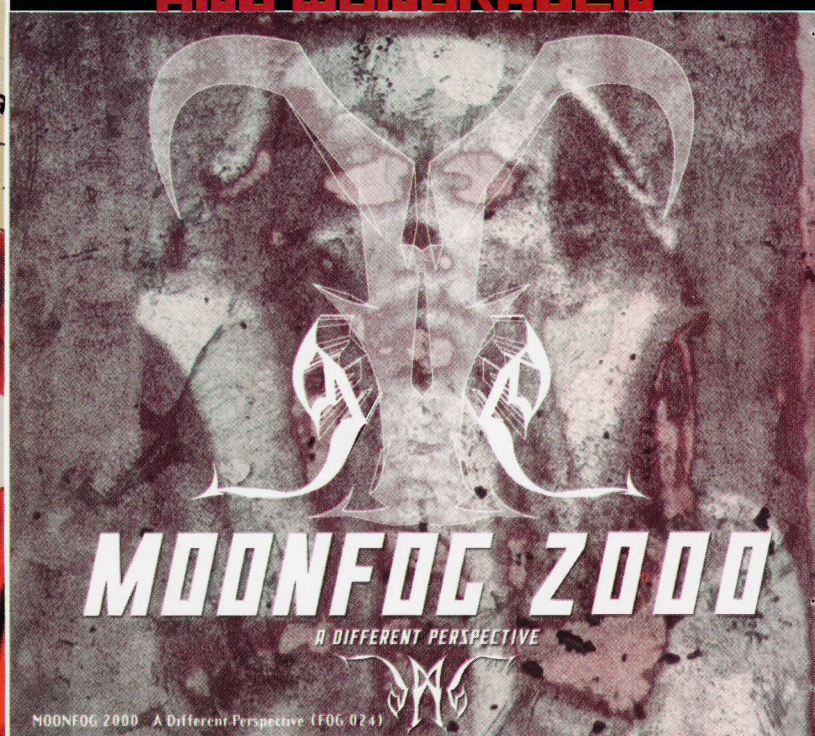

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with

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from

PANTERA

Dimebag Darrel is a revered name within the metal guitar province. Along side of Zakk Wylde, Dime is currently the imperious emperor of the six-string among the throws of today's mundane, three-chord rock that infiltrates the airwaves of America. Not only is it Darrell's lead quality that makes him admirable, but also his colossal rhythm guitar riffage that has influenced bands and guitarists (myself included) such as MACHINE HEAD, MESHUGGAH or SEVENDUST. Grab a cold one and sit back as Dime cusses and discusses guitars, gutter sluts and beer guzzling!

Pit: I know that Ace Frehley had a major impact on you as a guitarist growing up, but I have always heard hints of Eddie Van Halen and Randy Rhoads in your lead playing as well.

Dimebag Darrel: Exactly! Eddie Van Halen, Randy Rhoads, Tony Iommie, shit, I could go on for hours, but Ace is the one who really set me off. The only reason I wanted a guitar was because I was twelve years old and I was tired of putting on the KISS makeup and playing a tennis racket. After about a year of doing that and skipping school, I was shaking the guitar around and banging on it and I started getting some action out of the fucker. I ended up learning the riff to "Smoke on the Water" on the low E string and after that it was another world. I was like, "damn I want to play this mother fucker." I would have picked it up eventually because it's in my soul but Ace is the one that took the horse to the water.

I'm sure jamming with your brother helped out with your timing.

He was playing drums in the high school marching band and I was trying to follow him and play the drums too. It's exactly like the Eddie and Alex Van Halen story. I was trying to be the shit on the drums and he was the shit, so I got set back and ended up with the axe and I'm sure glad I did. He taught me a lot about timing and walked me through things. He is the only drummer that I have jammed with and that snowballed into what it is today. I mean we were throwing down live when people were just learning to get their dick hard and jack off (laughter). When we're writing songs and we got that thing going on where we are reading each other and we can tell something is coming and we know when to drop in. That's when some of the best things come out of PANTERA. That spontaneity is the magic that PANTERA's got. Usually our songs only take thirty or forty minutes to piece together.

The one thing that I always dug about your pre-*Cowboys From Hell *recordings was the fact that you always had an "Eruption" type of guitar solo. I would really like to see that type of thing reemerge on your new stuff.

That shit has definitely not left me, I still got the old school mentality but with the new ass kicking angle on it. I actually have been thinking about throwing down on a solo because I can still rip that shit up. It may be coming on the next record so I'm glad you brought that up. Dude, back in the club days, I used to take a whole set for a solo, anywhere from fifteen, twenty to thirty minutes, hell, sometimes even longer. The end of "Flood" off of *Great Southern Trend Kill* is actually a broken down mellow part that I used to do in my solo. It just fit so perfect that I had to throw it in there. There really isn't much to guitar playing anymore because kids don't throw leads on their records. As far as the old school, that's when mother fuckers used to rip the strings off the thing.

Why did you decide to go with WASHBURN instead of the original DEAN that you used to play?

Well, they went out of business first of all. They were making good guitars, just no one cared about them. I could go into a pawnshop and buy those things for seventy-five, a hundred bucks a piece. I would bring em' home, trick em out, paint em up and make em bad ass. The next thing you know, here comes PANTERA and I'm blowing this thing up so I feel responsible for that guitar. Even though WASHBURN didn't make it originally, they're making it my way. I got a couple of different models. There is "The Culprit" which has a chunky ass tone and I love it. Then there is "The Mini," which I don't play live. Its for kids that are smaller that want one as they are growing up. "The Dime 3 Signature" is always going to be the classic, but "The Stealth" is probably my current favorite. We did some different stuff to it and it's wicked as fuck. We changed over to an ebony fingerboard, jumbo frets with Bill Lawrence pickups and the weight of the guitar is even lighter because we beveled it down so much.

What about this bad ass new amp I have been hearing about, "The Warhead"?

What I wanted to do for the kids is give them an amp that they don't have to do nothin' to but plug in. We built a gain stage that is super, super hot. Most amps on ten are kinda chunky but you have to add something in front of it to get it really overdriven. On this thing the gain says its on ten but its really going to eighteen or twenty. I wanted to make sure you could really get to where you want to go. It's got the bass, its got the treble but on the mid's its got a mid frequency, and a boost or a cut on it. You can set it flat and add mid's, or you can set it below flat so you are actually scooping the mid's. With most amps you're not removing the mid's, your just turning them down. Removing them is where you get that depth in your tone like the big chunk that lets the lows hum, and the highs cut. It has a nine band EQ that can really get your tone and get the vortex that you're looking for. I also put sixteen preset effects on there like the ones I use in PANTERA. I figure kids will still use their pedals, but if you ever get stuck with only a guitar, the amp and a cord, this is the fucker to plug into, cause its got it all. It's three hundred watts so its louder then fuck, and it has four twelve inch speakers in the top cabinet and two fifteen's in the bottom.

Towards the topic of drinkin', do you really have a keg in your living room?

Yeah, you know the motherfucker is dry right now (laughter). Kegs don't last a week around this motherfucker. Here, I'm going to kick it on one time and let you hear it CO_2 out...(spraying air accompanied by laughter). You like that? Good ol' keg smell coming off it.

Micha Kite

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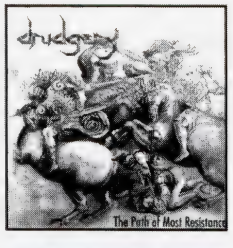

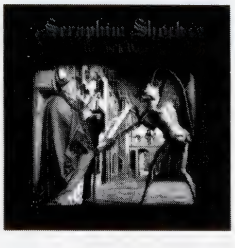

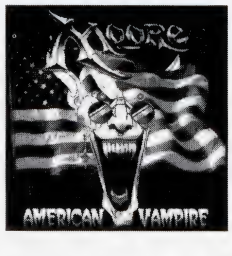

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King Diamond

KING DIAMOND never sleeps, he is always working. The man is very dedicated to his music and his two bands. When he's not writing or touring with MERCYFUL FATE, he is busy with his solo stuff. When asked when the last time he took a vacation was, he says it was eight years ago. The man is a supreme workaholic, but on the other hand he gets wonderful results. The new album, *House Of God*, is a concept story unlike any other one from KING DIAMOND. This time KING takes a deep journey in the center of his mind, and tries to ask himself some important questions about the relevance of human existence, or should we say, his own.

Pit: Ok, KING, get us started on the new record.

KING DIAMOND: Well, there is always something new going on with us. The new album has a concept story to it, but it also has a very important question that we try to underline this time. We always try to put something underneath the texture. It's a little bit different this time. The story the new album presents goes throughout a lot of different emotions, but the main thing appears towards the end of the album. By the time you hit the middle part of "Catacomb," the album then narrows the story down to the main point, and talks about the gods that people made to exist. The essence of it is that we, the people, don't know why we're here. There are many different theories and beliefs as to why we are here, but when the actual question's asked we don't have a straight answer. It's kind of a scary thought, and it's not funny to think of it, but we had to go all the way throughout with it on this album. I personally have no idea why I'm here. I have no clue as to what the soul is, and what will happen afterwards when I die. I do have some religious beliefs that don't remind me of one specific religion, but I do believe that I've been here before. I believe that everyone lives a certain amount of lives, and continues to exist in different forms. But, then again I have no real proof of this to myself. When I ask myself 'what facts do I have here?,', or 'what do I have to live by this time?,' I realize that I have nothing to give me any answers or outlines.

So, You're questioning your own identity at this point?

Completely, you don't know why you're here, don't know your purpose, and don't know what will happen later when you die.

That's a very strong question when you get all the way down to your roots. I believe anyone alive has asked that question at least once in their lifetime.

Yes, you're right. I'm doing it right now, and it's not the first time I did it, but this time I'm not letting it go. This perhaps explains why people have so many Gods they pray to. There's that strong uncertainty of death. Everyone asks, 'am I really gonna be done when the moment comes, or is there something more to this?' It's hard to live with these kinds of thoughts, so people decided to create Gods to help you deal with it. To me, Gods appear to be pacifiers. It's kinda like you deal with a little child when it cries, you give it a pacifier, and it no longer cries. This works the same way with older people. When they get really uncomfortable with things they don't understand, they look for something to grab onto. Then they feel that everything is going to take care of itself, and they no longer need to worry. I think people should think about it more often, and question things. When you get to the point where death is breathing down your neck, you get very uncomfortable no matter how strong you are. One thing that really bothers me when I have these thoughts is how people are able to go to war over their religious beliefs. There is no proof that one religion is better than another, so why do they choose to go to war over nothing? I can't understand how people can challenge each other over something they made up in their minds. If one religion had the proof that it's absolutely right, then everyone would be part of it, but it's not the case. When you look at Gods, it is believed that they created man in their own image, but it appears to be quite opposite. It's the people who created Gods in their own image. We're kind of able to relate to them in some way, but there are many things that we still don't understand. That's what this album is about. It tells you that it would be a much better world if religion wasn't so up front because all it is, is a pacifier for the peace of mind.

To go a little bit further on the story itself. It asks the highest God to show itself to the humans, and give some proof that it really exists, and tell us what is our final goal.

Why do we live, and what do we live for? You see, people have the hard time understanding the beginning of times, or when did we really start to live. How do we compare to the universe? We're only a very small part of the big picture, and we don't even have the full understanding of what is the big picture. I realize that

the life I'm living is, unfortunately, completely meaningless in the big picture. That could be why there probably is no God that's looking over us. When a tornado comes and kills 25 people, but saves you, you're thankful to God for being spared, but what about the others? Where do you draw the line between which souls count, and which ones don't?

I live my life the way I do, and it turns out that it is very unimportant. I don't know where I'm going, and what my real purpose it. Perhaps I should stop thinking about these questions because I realize that I will never get the answers.

Does that erase the beliefs you're known for?

Well, no. But, I'm just realizing certain things that could actually make a big difference in how the world operates and thinks. You can't prove anything to others, and others can't prove to you that they're on the right track and you're not. People should slow down their lives and look for things that make them feel good and happy, and once they realize what that is, then they should pursue it full force. Also, I believe that there is a spiritual world. Why is it there, and how it should be looked at, I don't know that. So, when I come to any points, and I may have some theories, I ask myself "is it reality?" But, at least I'm willing to admit that I don't understand, or don't know. So, I don't waste a lot of time convincing people that I have all the answers. When I first came up with that concept, I called up Andy (La Rocque), we talked about it, and decided to go all the way with it. So, there's me talking to Andy, who has some kids, and telling him that his kids lives are meaningless and all this other stuff, and it took some explaining at first to get him to believe in this theory. I'm not telling people that there's one God that's the right one to believe. I'm telling them exactly the opposite, because I don't have a clue myself. I came to accept that fact, and it made a big difference in my life. During the making of the record, Andy's dad passed away, he went through out a terrible time, so it brought us even closer together. My dad passed away too, some time ago, so at least now I had someone to talk to who felt the same way, and it wasn't easy.

You've done several concept albums in the past but this one is the most mature.

Yes, that's true. It's weird how it all came out. I was working on many songs during the MERCYFUL FATE tour, but when it ended I couldn't find any of my notes. I completely misplaced them, so it took a little bit longer to get it all together.

What musical aspects of the band did you concentrate on this time?

That's the thing that's hard for us to answer because we never sit down and talk about how we will write the music. We have always had a complete personal freedom from the record label. What we record, they release. It's not like we send five songs in, and they say that they don't like them, and we have to write new ones. We're in complete control here. So, what we write comes straight from the heart. There is nothing ever planned. Sure, we talk about the arrangements, or we try to play with tempo. There is never any formula about how to write the songs, or what directions they should go. Andy lives in Sweden, and he had his stuff written way before I had mine, and when we combined the material everything was just fitting in. The album definitely has some new elements that **KING DIAMOND** never tried before, so it should be interesting for the fans. The album has a very orchestrated sound and feel to it, there are a lot of instruments doing different things at the same time, it will take a few listens before people figure out what is really going on there. Some of those songs made us feel weird when we played them, but when we listened back to it, the sound was amazing.

Also, there are some new members in the band, who are they?

We have a new guitarist named Glen Drover. Glen is from Toronto, and he joined us after the *Voodoo* album, to do the tour. So, he's been in for a while, but this is the first time I had a chance to work with him in the studio. It was a great surprise to me because Glen has so many great ideas, and his technique is unbelievable. Also, we got a new bass player right before going to the studio to record this album. His name is David Harbour. He is probably the best bass player I ever played with, so the band is definitely stronger than ever. Of course there is nothing bad to say about the guys that are no longer here. Most people who leave the band do it because their lives change. I understand it, and respect it. People get married, start families, and are no longer able to lead this lifestyle. That was the case with our previous guitar and bass player. I always try to be very understanding when such changes take place, and it really comes down to knowing what you want to do with your life, and which direction you want to take it.

Mark Kadzielawa

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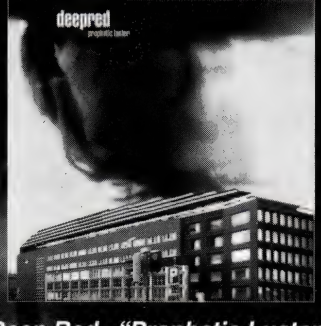
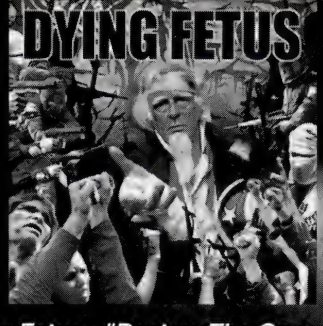


Deep Red - "Prophetic Luster" (BFR005)



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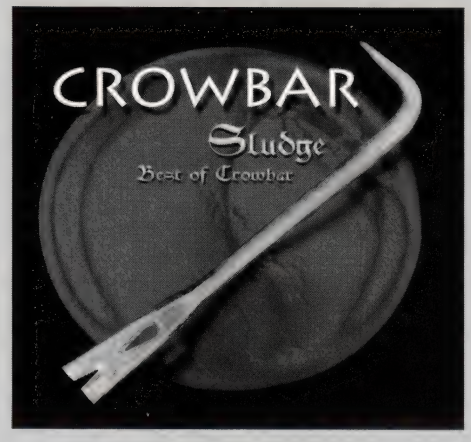

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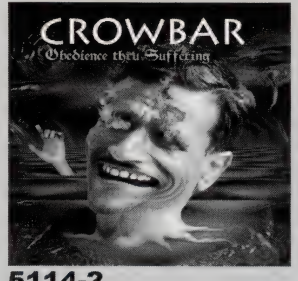

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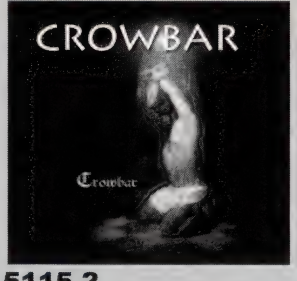

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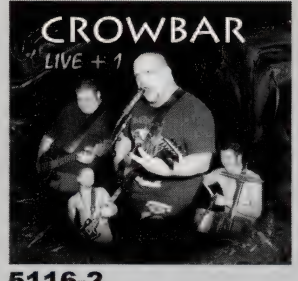

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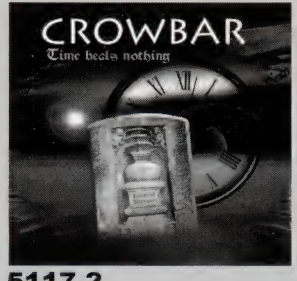

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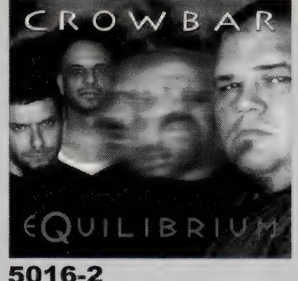

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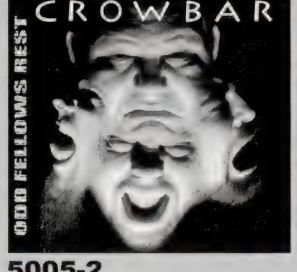

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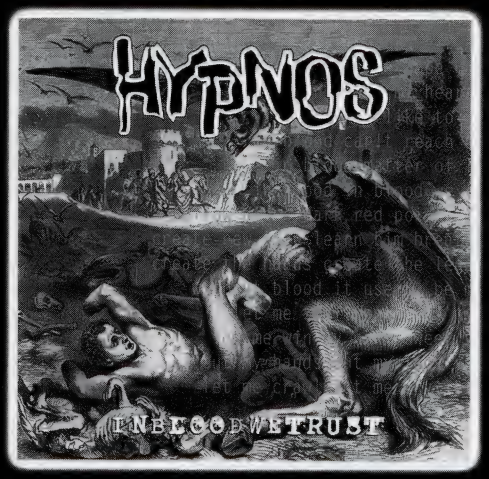

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German-based **GRAVE DIGGER** is still active in the ranks of metal and recently has been dubbed into knighthood with *Excalibur*, part three of a trilogy. Songs such as "Pendragon," "Excalibur" and "Tristan's Fate," find the band vanquishing in new lands and sounding tighter as a unit then ever before. Who could deny the significance of 84's thrash attack heavy metal breakdown? But in the new aeon, **GRAVE DIGGER** has transfigured into a new creature with a raucous attack. Teetering on the edge of power metal and thrash (not unlike **AGENT STEEL**), *Excalibur* personifies the grail of metal as perceived and they will not stop until their quest for victory has been met. "Together We Stand, Steel In Our Hands, Fighting Forever, Forever We Stand."

Pit: You guys have kinda been out of the spotlight for awhile, at least over here in America. What has the response been to Excalibur?

Stefan Arnold: To be honest, it has been really great all over Europe, South America and Japan. The only reaction we are waiting for is from North America (laughter). This is the only country where we have no idea where our position is. After our third album *Wargames*, **GRAVE DIGGER** broke up for awhile and went by the name DIGGER and that was very commercial, sort of like BON JOVI. We really wanted to enter the American market, which didn't work. After that the band split up for six years. We are now armed with a new label. When we were on GUN Records we never got any American press, but now with Nuclear Blast we are doing, like, five to ten interviews a day.

On the last few albums you have created a trilogy, but this is the first part that a lot of Americans have heard from you. What part of the story have we missed?

Well, three years ago we were thinking what to write about before we recorded *Tunes of War*. We were tired of topics like society and the problems with politics because you have this daily on TV and in the newspaper. We decided to write three or four songs about Scottish history and the record sales were so good we decided to make a trilogy out of it. A lot of bands seem to copy this concept now because, in the moment it works, and that's the reason our next record will be a concept album without history. *Excalibur* is basically a rock opera and when you watch the movie *Excalibur* you will find all thirteen songs within the movie. We didn't just watch the movie; we read a lot of books also. The last album was about the Knights of Templar and that was the most difficult album to write about. We read, like, over four thousand pages of history. There is a direct connection between the three albums. On *Tunes of War* to *Knights of The Cross*, you can see that the Templars were able to escape from the revenge of the Pope. They escaped to Scotland and fought with the Scottish against the English. From *Knights of The Cross* to *Excalibur*, the connection is the Holy Grail. The Grail is the sign of the Templars, who never found it, but it was what they were looking for.

What's the connection between GRAVE DIGGER the band and GRAVE DIGGER the monster truck?

Well, you know how the pro wrestlers have their melody played when they enter the arenas? Nuclear Blast is trying to set us up to write the melody for the monster truck. This would be good exposure for us in North America. Whatever the case, I hope we get more exposure in the U.S. and I would like to add that fans should believe in heavy metal and not in the MTV generation.

Micha Kite

NUCLEAR BLAST AMERICA

Hailing from California, notorious for gorgeous women, beaches, and palm trees to some (not necessarily the aesthetics of a typical black metal band), where the amount of promising U.S. black metal bands can be counted with fingers on one hand, comes ABYSSMAL NOCTURNE. While not devoting their time to playing the newest "wave" of black metal, introducing electronic elements or incorporating excessive keyboard arrangements, they prefer to keep the style raw which clearly shows with their first and current demo, "The Gates Beyond the Stars" an impressive four song occult opus with a hatefilled black metal sound to boost.

Pit: Let's first start off with you introducing* ABYSSMAL NOCTURNE *to the readers; what goals do you have set for the band and what is currently going on with the band?

Blackstorm: We have only one plan; that is to play our music. The only other thing that we have is to rehearse or maybe start writing more music. We will play a fest here in the States in November, and more shows later. For now we will work on releasing our full length on Spectral Arts Productions.

What are your views on the current US black metal scene? Are you involved with it more than just being a band from the country? Do you feel that black metal still holds the "aura" it once had or is it just a lost cause?

We think that the scene has definitely become stale over the years. The scene sucks here in the States as everyone knows, and when bands do come here, they seem to feel the same way. It's true that the U.S. is hungry for black metal, but when a good show comes along it's a big hassle trying to get on the bill. The stupid promoters that [put on] the shows have no idea about black metal or the fucking scene! They will have bigger acts go on before a lesser known act and shit like that. We simply do not look forward to all the shows that we get. People are unorganized and confused while trying to focus on their fucking money. There is though, a real underground occult scene here, people supporting the true black metal, which is good.

You are also involved with your own record label. When did this come about, what have you released so far, and do you plan on making it known for distribution, etc.?

Spectral Arts Productions is the name of our label, and we will be releasing **ABYSSMAL NOCTURNE**, WARSTORM, INFERNAL KINGDOM, and some others. We are currently working on a compilation, which will feature Spectral Arts bands and more underground raw/occultic black metal!

Would you like to share any final words to wrap up the interview?

Our music will continue to stay in its traditional, raw, and dark way as people already know. The music essence of **ABYSSMAL NOCTURNE** is of pure raw occultic hate!

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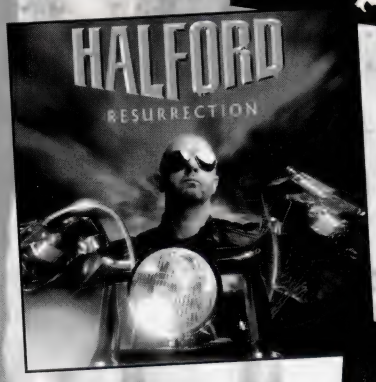

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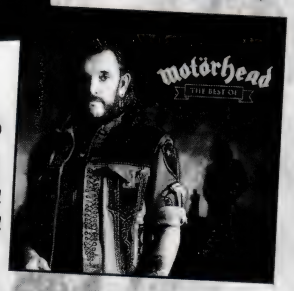

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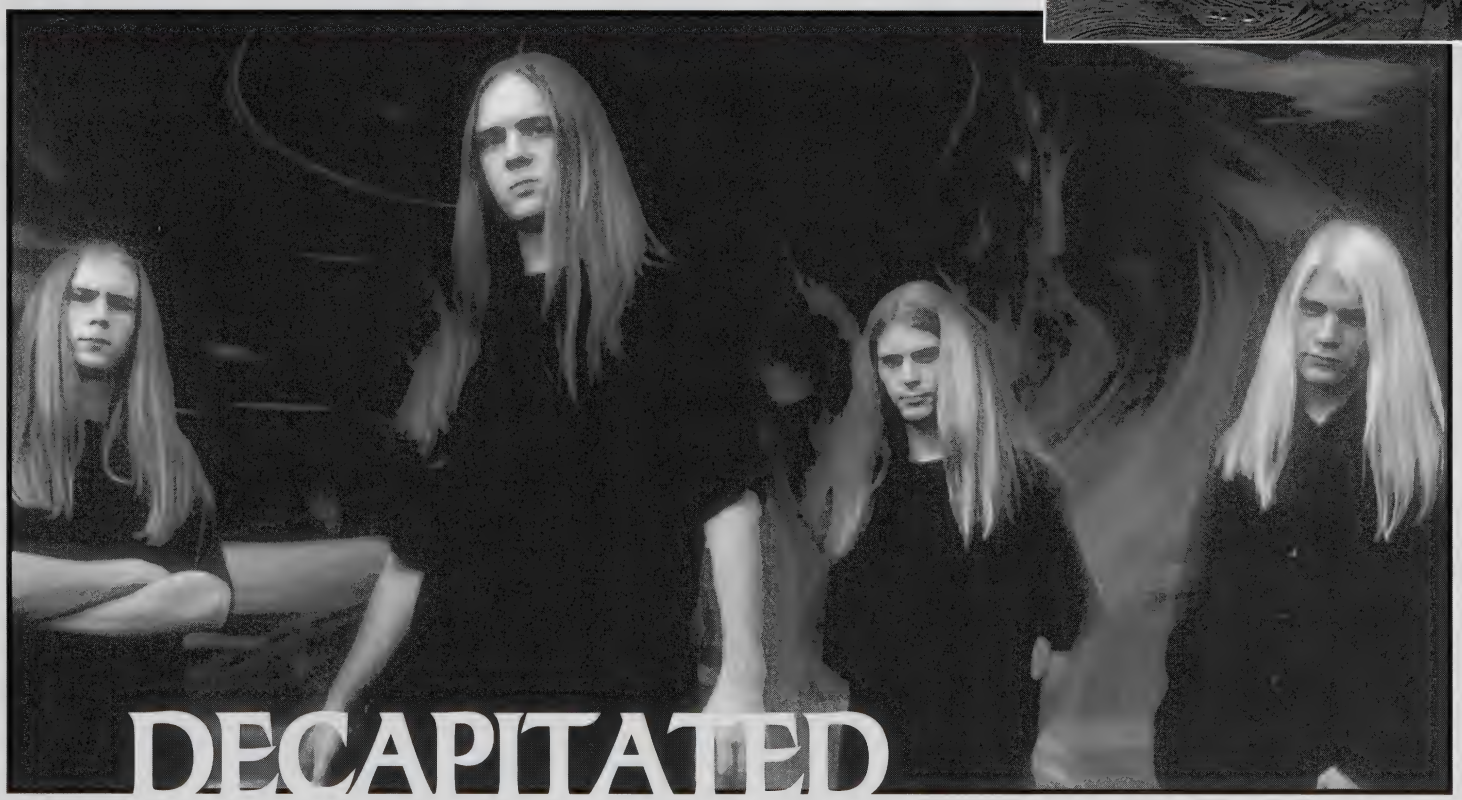
COMING SOON!
ANNIHILATOR [CARNIVAL DIABLOS]

They say that nothing ever comes easily or quickly in life, but for Polish death metallers *DECAPITATED,* just the mere thought of such an affirmation couldn't be any further from the truth. During its mere three and a half-year existence, the band has already surpassed the likes of VADER and BEHEMOTH with its enormously technical and brutal sound. And might I add, they're still in their tender teens to boot! While most guys at their age are still jamming in hot, sweaty garages, *DECAPITATED* have ultimately come full circle, but not without its share of hardships, of course. Still, they've managed to achieve what most only dream of doing in such a short period of time. On that note, I was fortunate enough to interview these guys to find out more. Here's what went down.



DECAPITATED

Pit: For being such a very young group of guys, DECAPITATED's sound is professionally tight and cohesive. How did you guys manage to evolve so quickly? To what do you owe for such musical ability?

Martin: Nothing has happened suddenly. **DECAPITATED** has been around since 1996 and we messed around with instruments even before that, so where we are now is the result of long, hard work. It's not like it has come without blood, sweat and tears. We practice a lot, not necessarily special exercises. We simply play our instruments all the time. Believe me, a little bit of talent and a lot of hard work can get you really far. You just have to be systematic and disciplined.

Do you find that being so young has its limitations? Do people tend to doubt or misjudge the band in any way because of that?

The fact that we are so young doesn't seem to be any kind of obstacle. Of course, every now and then there are people who say something like "Ehh, they are so young they can't be worth shit," but most people treat us normally, so to say. I am not surprised that so many fans pay attention to our age, but then again it's not about us specifically. I am sure that a band comprising only 60-year-olds would instigate equal interest. The reception of our music has been, so far, very good, which is really encouraging. And the fact that there are so many more experienced and older bands around does not change the situation a single bit. It's not a problem for us, for sure. They do their own thing, we do our own thing and that's fine.

Unsurprisingly, your sound is heavily inspired by VADER. Surely enough, you even had the opportunity of having one of its band members (Peter) produce your debut album. Now, what was it like working with someone that has been such an influence on what you do today? Would you agree to an extent that the best producers come from being actual musicians themselves?

It's not very surprising. In Poland, VADER is unquestionably number one as far as metal goes. We are good friends with them, especially since we play together quite a lot. Despite the fact that they are really big, we feel quite normal in their company. Peter himself was also so helpful during the session; we didn't have to waste time experimenting with things in the studio. He definitely contributed a lot to the overall effect of the album. And no, I don't think that all musicians are necessarily good producers, but this time Peter really proved himself.

I'm curious to know where you found the inspirations to such interesting song titles like "Eye of Hours," "Nine Steps," and "The First Damned." By any chance, is this album a concept piece?

No. Lyrics and tracks themselves come from various releases so it's more of a look at our past and present. Sauron, who wrote all lyrics, is usually inspired by books he reads, in this case, one on ancient religions. "The Eye of Hours" and "Nine Steps" are directly inspired by the Egyptian mythology and "The First Damned" is a sort of anti-God monologue.

Last but not least, you even managed to pull off an excellent cover of SLAYER's "Mandatory Suicide." Just out of curiosity, what lead you to choose to cover this particular SLAYER cut amongst the hundreds of others? How would you explain the impact SLAYER has had on you and which SLAYER album do you attach the most sentimentality to?

SLAYER is a great band. Their music is awesome. When we were really small, they were already decimating concert halls! "Mandatory Suicide" is simply a great cut which comes across really great when mixed with the death metal meat, particularly in live situations. The audience always goes berserk when we play it. The best SLAYER album? I don't know, maybe *South of Heaven*?

Rob Aloi

DEM101

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ATB101	**THE ATOMIC BITCHWAX** - ALBUM COVER TS
BCH101	**SEBASTIAN BACH** - COMIC BOOK COVER TS
BCH104	**SEBASTIAN BACH** - GLITTER FACE TS
BFB101	**BLOOD FOR BLOOD** - SKULL & CROSSBONES TS
BNG101	**BONGZILLA** - LOGO TS
BRU101	**BRUTAL TRUTH** - KILL TREND SUICIDE TS
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CNC102	**CANNIBAL CORPSE** - CATHERDRAL TS
CNC103	**CANNIBAL CORPSE** - GALLERY HARIKARI LS
CNC104	**CANNIBAL CORPSE** - CATHERDRAL LS
CNC105	**CANNIBAL CORPSE** - TOMB OF THE MUTILATED TS
CNC106	**CANNIBAL CORPSE** - BUTCHERED AT BIRTH TS
CNC107	**CANNIBAL CORPSE** - BUTCHERED AT BIRTH LS
CNC108	**CANNIBAL CORPSE** - VILE TS
CNC109	**CANNIBAL CORPSE** - VILE LS
CNC110	**CANNIBAL CORPSE** - THE BLEEDING TS
CNC111	**CANNIBAL CORPSE** - THE BLEEDING LS
CNC112	**CANNIBAL CORPSE** - EATEN BACK TO LIFE TS
CNC113	**CANNIBAL CORPSE** - EATEN BACK TO LIFE LS
CNC114	**CANNIBAL CORPSE** - DISFIGURED TS
CNC115	**CANNIBAL CORPSE** - DISFIGURED LS
CNC116	**CANNIBAL CORPSE** - TOMB OF THE MUTILATED LS
CNC117	**CANNIBAL CORPSE** - BLOODTHIRST TS
CNC118	**CANNIBAL CORPSE** - BLOODTHIRST LS
CNC119	**CANNIBAL CORPSE** - DEMON TS
CNC120	**CANNIBAL CORPSE** - DEMON LS
CEN101	**CENTURY MEDIA RECORDS** - LOGO TS
CHE101	**CHEAP TRICK** - CLASSIC LOGO TS
CRY101	**CRYPTOPSY** - CRYPTOPSY TS
CRY102	**CRYPTOPSY** - CRYPTOPSY LS
DCD101	**DECEASED** - FEARLESS UNDEAD MACHINES TS
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DIO103	**DIO** - HOLY DIVER LS
DIO104	**DIO** - LOGO BABYDOLL
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EMP102	**EMPEROR** - ANTHEMS TO THE WELKIN LS
EMP103	**EMPEROR** - NIGHTSIDE ECLIPSE TS
EMP104	**EMPEROR** - NIGHTSIDE ECLIPSE LS
EMP105	**EMPEROR** - PRIESTESS TS
EMP106	**EMPEROR** - PRIESTESS LS
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NLE103	**NILE** - IN THE BEGINNING TS
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VENOM

Where would've the underground ended up without the likes of MOTORHEAD and **VENOM**? Their groundbreaking combination of speed, white noise and pounding double bass was unlike anything else, drawing the blueprints for metal madness to come. While MOTORHEAD stuck to the biker look and streetwise attitude, it was **VENOM**'s satanic imagery that danced with the devil. The beast had crept into the music previously with OZZY screaming "No, No" as Satan was coming around the bend, but not until Cronos chanted "Evil, In League With Satan" was the horned one so effectual as he head banged along to the beat of the band. Although the antics of **VENOM** may have been somewhat tongue in cheek, it was this persona that influenced countless bands in the underground today.

Thrash is once again prevalent with bands returning to their original form (DESTRUCTION, EXODUS or SODOM) and now is the perfect time for a big **VENOM** record. I asked Cronos what the underlying theme was to the title "Resurrection." "We wanted to make the distinction between the reunion **VENOM** and the new "Resurrection" **VENOM**. We feel as if we have a new edge to this, and we kinda got a big kick up the ass as everything is rocking on a bit better. It has always been Mantas and I who have written all the **VENOM** songs and I think we have really come up with some good stuff this time. We actually wrote twenty-three songs and had to cut that down to fourteen. We threw songs away and we were able to put together what we thought was the best fourteen tracks, and they're the ones with the best hooks, drive and power. We tried to make a complete **VENOM** album that has something for everyone."

Photos: Frank White

Almost two decades later and Baphomet's blood still boils in **VENOM**. "It doesn't matter which way you do things, someone is going to take it the wrong way. The bottom line is we are entertainers and artists and the word entertain, to us, means having a good time. It means laughing and carrying on and we like to have a fuckin' joke like everybody else. Considering this is the entertainment business we feel privileged to enjoy ourselves. We used to put things on our records as jokes like "Teachers Pet." We would always like to have this as well as the hardcore image. It was that one element where you could kick back and go 'oh look, these guys are fucking human'. We still like to have fun and have a bit of the amber nectar."

How does Cronos feel about his influence in today's underground and does he feel any responsibility for the murders and church burnings that have governed the European scene? "I don't know about being responsible for someone's actions, but if we have influenced the music then hell yes, because really we are just heavy metal fans also. Twenty years ago there wasn't shit for heavy metal. The SABBATH and PRIEST bands weren't doing shit and what we were pissed-off about was the DEF LEPPARD and IRON MAIDEN type of bands. We wanted to make metal heavier, more pissed off, punk, hardcore and snot and shit. Twenty years later, if a band has taken one small thing from **VENOM** that keeps them hardcore and heavy, that's great. I don't give a fuck about who started what, where and how, but the point is there is metal all over and that's a great thing."

So what's up with the autopsy/incantation spoken part of "Pain" if not to summon up the dark one himself? "Excellent, I'm glad you noticed. It's something that Mantas and myself came up with. Mantas wrote the song and we both came up with the autopsy at the end. We thought it was another area where, yes we are **VENOM** and yes we are dark and nasty, but at the same time we can have a bit of humor. The autopsy report is actually quite cool because it's the autopsy of Christ (chuckles), so next time listen to the words because it has a nice little twist."

After nearly two decades with the band as the skin-smasher, what made Abbadon finally leave during their return? "Basically I'm telling everyone the same story. He just started becoming involved with the band less and less. Eventually we had a record company that said 'do we have a deal here, and can we hear some music?' We asked a friend of ours named Anton if he would get together with us because Mantas and I had wrote a bunch of songs and we were getting on with the deal. When it came time to actually record the album, Abbadon was nowhere to be seen. He had notified the record company that he was off to do something else. They heard our demo with Anton and said 'hell yeah, let's get the album done with him.' We had been rehearsing for nearly a year with him when the decision was made that this was right. A friend told me 'I don't give a shit about the original lineup, I want to hear a great **VENOM** album,' and I thought fucking hell, that's what really matters."

Cronos has always been known for his left of center humor. With this in mind, I closed by asking him to tell a joke. "Fucking hell, the only good joke I have heard lately is an album called *I Am Legion* by Abbadon (much laughter). When you hear it you'll cry".

Micha Kite

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AGENTS OF OBLIVION

FORMED OUT OF THE ASHES OF THE NOW DEFUNCT **ACID BATH** (PERHAPS ONE THE MOST UNDERRATED BANDS OF THE EARLY 90'S), **AGENTS OF OBLIVION** MARKS THE BEGINNING OF A WHOLE NEW ERA IN EXTREME MUSIC. THOUGH THEY'VE MANAGED TO ACHIEVE A SIZEABLE CULT FOLLOWING BACK IN THE DAY, **ACID BATH**'S UNIQUE SOUND OF NEW ORLEANS PSYCHEDELIC SLUDGE ROCK WAS, UNFORTUNATELY, FAR BEYOND ANY HUMAN COMPREHENSION. THUS DISBANDING AND LEAVING TWO OF ITS MEMBERS TO CARRY ON (VOCALIST DAX RIGGS AND RHYTHM GUITARIST MIKE SANCHEZ), A WHOLE NEW DIRECTION WAS PAVED, AND WITH IT, A FOUNDATION DEEPLY ROOTED IN THE FUNDAMENTALS OF JAZZ AND BLUES. MUSICALLY FAR MORE SUBDUED THAN **ACID BATH**, **AGENTS** MARKS A DRAMATICALLY BOLD STEP INTO TERRITORIES OFTEN DEEMED TOO TABOO FOR EXTREME MUSIC, BUT MAINTAINS ITS HEAVINESS THROUGH A MYRIAD OF INFLUENCES. SOMETHING AKIN TO A CROSS BETWEEN OLD **SKYNYRD** AND OLD **SABBATH**, **AGENTS** WILL UNDOUBTEDLY APPEAL TO FANS NEW AND OLD. WITH THAT IN MIND, GUITARIST AND FOUNDING MEMBER MIKE SANCHEZ WAS MORE THAN HAPPY TO DISCUSS WITH ME HIS NEWFOUND MUSICAL INSPIRATION AS WELL AS THE CURRENT STATE OF HIS FLEDGLING BAND AS IT STOOD.

Pit: So what's up with* AGENTS OF OBLIVION*? Since you've just released an album obviously there has to be some tours in the works. Anything you'd care to share?

Mike Sanchez: Well, we just did a couple of tours and I guess you could say they pretty much failed, due to what I don't know. I guess it had to do with money situations and people need to eat to survive, ya know. So, we took people on the road with us that needed to make this amount of money, including myself, and we didn't make it so we stopped touring.

So, how does this differ from your predicament in ACID BATH? I mean, I understand that Audie's (the bassist) death played a big part in ACID BATH's break up, but it seems like it's all happening all over again. So what seems to be going through your mind at this point?

Ok, I can say this.. ACID BATH was more like a big friendship. Dax and I, Jimmy, Sammy, and Audie pretty much took care of each other. We grew with each other. We toured a lot and so we kind of like became each others' pals, ya know friends. In other words, I could kick Sammy or Audie's ass but no one else could (laughs). It's like that kind of pact; that kind of partnership. With **AGENTS OF OBLIVION,** we didn't grow up together. Dax and I did grow up musically together, but we were the only cats that had the contract. The other guys were just hired musicians. I mean, they were more than just hired musicians, but in a way they were just that. They were pretty much musicians that we thought were just great. They were good in the group and they were good for us. I don't know, but somehow things just began to fall apart. I don't know if it's because we didn't grow up together and knew exactly what kind of people we were, or if it was just time for Dax to do his own thing, and for me to do my own thing.

Well, obviously there's a definite change in direction between the two. Whereas ACID BATH tended to be this drug induced sound of death rock,* AGENTS' *sound on the other hand is way more soulfully uplifting. In fact, there are certain parts where the keyboards sound awfully a lot like something you'd hear coming from a church choir sing-along.

Well you see, it's just another way of thinking. It's another way of being. It's another way of portraying who you are. I'm sure you're not just a one-dimensional person, right? No one is. I don't expect anyone to be. So, I tried to let everyone know that I'm not just a death metal guy. I did write songs like "Bones of Baby Dolls" and "New Death Sensation." Basically, these were slower songs that I wrote, so I wanted to portray that in the **AGENTS**. Sammy wrote a lot of death metal riffs, and I wrote more of the chord progression type singing songs. So, I think that's where the **AGENTS** comes out of, by not having Sammy and Audie there to write these heavy, doomy riffs. I mean, some of this record is doomy and heavy, but most of it is, as you say soulful type Rock n' Roll. So, I tried to take Jazz elements, classical elements, Blues, and Rock n' Roll and blend them all into this record just to try and make sense of what I am and what everyone else is, I guess.

Yeah, it's kind of funny you mentioned the whole blues and jazz aspect because I kind of detected that on the AGENTS disc as well. In fact, upon listening to the song "Ladybug" it kind of made me recall some of the earliest Dixieland Jazz artists from, like, the early 20's. It just has that vibe to it, ya know? It's still heavy, but on a more intellectual level. It's like when peo-

ple think of the term "heavy" they automatically think loud guitar riffs, but for me it's always been defined as something that can affect you more on an emotional level than an aural one.

Yeah, well he ain't heavy, he's my brother! (Laughter) You know what I'm saying? It doesn't have to turn your gut into a shitload when you're listening to it for it to be heavy. It can be heavy on the soul. It could be heavy on the heart. It could be heavy on the mind. It could be heavy on your pecker, you know? There's a lot of different elements of heavy.

Definitely. The only gripe I found with the disc was the last song. I forgot the name of it, but it appeared to be very inconsistent with the rest of the album. I mean, here you listening to songs that are extremely uplifting in mood but then the last song kind of kills it with it's very dark and dismal nature. Of course, I'm referring to the one that contains the little movie dialogue about killing a "queer rabbit." For me, it was like a kick to the head so to speak. What's the whole idea behind that?

Well, originally that was Dax's idea. The movie we saw was called "Gummo." It's by Harmony Corin, the same guy who did "Kids." To me, this is what that means, ok? The whole album is uplifting, it makes you seem like the whole world is all nice and beautiful. It gets you away from the world, ok? But in the meantime, then it's the year 2000 and what happened to all of the flying cars? Why are people still in trailer parks killing cats? Why are people still eating rabbits? Why are people still doing all of this crazy fucking shit? We don't know, we don't know why, but they continue to do this. There are still people that live in poverty. Why is that? Can't we get these people jobs? Can't we get them on their feet? I'm sure we can instead of all these lobbyists putting money into the pockets of senators and congressmen to vote their fucking way. Why don't we put some of this money into shelters, something to help get these people on their fucking feet? So, that's what it's all basically about

Yeah, I kind of understand where you're coming from. However considering that this album marks a new beginning for you, would you say that you've managed to purge a lot of the demons that have been plaguing you in the past?

Purge my demons? Uhh.. I wish I could say I purged my demons, but my demons are always here. I have to realize that, but musically I think people should know where each of us are coming from. They know where Dax is coming from, from his lyrical writing. He's dark or demented, ya know (laughs)? Sometimes he can portray himself to be a murderer. Everyone knows that Sammy is really, really heavy with his GOATWHORE band, so I just tried to portray who I was which is basically, ya know, still trying to break out of something like a fire.

Where and how did you come up with the name* AGENTS OF OBLIVION*? What's the significance behind such a name, that is if you don't mind me asking?

Again, that's Dax. It was in a poem from one of the songs off the *Pagan Terrorism Tactics* album. I can't remember which one. It was just something that we took from Dax's poem, or rather something that Dax took from one of his poems. That's basically all it was, the **AGENTS** of nothingness, know what I mean? Because that's pretty much what ACID BATH was about. It's about the whole nothingness, but then again we need the nothingness, ok? Without nothingness we couldn't drink a glass of water because nothing is what holds the water in between the glass, you understand? So we need the nothingness and that's pretty much what everything was about with ACID BATH. So now it's just the **AGENTS** of nothing.. a big joke (laughs). That's what I get out of it, a big joke! We're the **AGENTS** of the unknown.

Right, kind of like a 4th Dimension I guess.

Right, but who's to know since it's the unknown. Who's to know? I don't know.. you know? I mean, I can tell you the big answer to life, the universe and everything. It's 42 but hey, know I gotta figure out what the fuck the question meant.

Rob Aloi

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If there is one thing DEICIDE deserves, it is respect. Out of the big three that define American death metal, they were integral to putting Florida and Morrisound studios on the map as the death metal capitol of the world. DEICIDE have also been the most consistent and true to how they started and what they helped to create a dozen years ago. With the recent release of Insineratehymn, DEICIDE, still comprised of all original members, a claim the other American big two cannot make, will swiftly silence the naysayers. The only thing Glen & company needed to prove with this record was if they could top themselves. They have fervid guitar aggression, vehement lyrical blasphemy, brutalizing guttural vocals, and flagrant drumming. *Insineratehymn* has all you expect from DEICIDE, plus more. With a bit of a slower approach and a slight groove, and featuring one of the best production jobs a DEICIDE album has ever received, DEICIDE have made their mark again for a new era of death metal. For a death metal band to hit their ten-year recording anniversary and still be on top of the game is quite a feat. With the recent release of *Insineratehymn*, DEICIDE are in top form and once again, on top of the genre.

Pit: So what are your touring plans for this album?

Glen Benton: Well, we should be out in a couple of months. We are in the process of finding a new agent. We just fired our agency. Well, I should not say we fired them, I guess I should say we mutually got out of contracts with them. So we are going to shop around a bit. I just do not want to contend with the bullshit I had to deal with before. I am talking to a booking agent right now, but I don't know if I want to put myself into a position with him.

What are your highlights on it? What songs do you like the most?

I am pleased with the whole thing, all the way around, the packaging, everything. I think I did a good job. Everybody did an awesome job on this record. Everybody says it is going to be a new chapter of **DEICIDE**, we will have to wait and see. I think this new record is going to capture a lot of attention. It cannot do anything but good. It is a better album than the previous one so I anticipate it doing better. Our idea was not to slow things down, but it's hard to get a guitar sound when you are playing ten thousand miles an hour. It is hard to get a good thick guitar sound. The dynamics on the vocals, it's kind of hard to make it really powerful when your screaming so fast. I could not be as pronounced as I wanted to be. This record gave me an opportunity, and gave Eric and Brian an opportunity to display a little more of our talent. It has texture. It has a little bit of everything.

The production is great, everything is very clear. The vocals really stand out; you can totally understand them.

I used a more guttural vocal pattern this time. The last record, I had my cronies in there with me, stopping me every five minutes. "Oh you can't hear this, you need to pronounce this clear." This time I told everybody to stay the fuck home. I wanted to do them the way I wanted them. I don't give a fuck about being legible. I just wanted everybody to hear what I sound like right in your face, not try to butter it up to try to keep up with the speed. It is basically a little bit of reverb, and little bit of stereo here and there, but basically a flat vocal track on the record.

Well guess what, it is very legible.

Well yeah, of all the records I have done with those assholes up in New York City, I think it is the most legible one yet. Many people I hang out with do not really listen to this type of music, but they are like "Wow, you can understand what you're saying." It has a lot to do with the production. In the past my vocals were cut back in the mix. This time it was just a case of standing our ground. We used Pro Tools, and that helped out a lot also. We mixed it and mastered it at Morrisound. We had the album recorded at Steve's house on our sixteen-track. We then gave the label a little sample, they gave us the money, and we went to Morrisound. We recorded in the "B" room, where we did the first album and our demos. I found it more comfortable and relaxed. This was an opportunity to save money. I told roadrunner, "I can do a record for $10,000.00." They were like "No way." Then I go do a record for $10,000.00. That's why Roadrunner loves me, because I am low maintenance. Half the time they do not do a goddamn bit of promotion, what little they do is not going to generate album sales. Last album I did not really talk to many people because I was going through a divorce. I did not want to have to hang up on people asking stupid questions about my personal life. But I am past all that shit now, so I am doing a lot of press for this record.

Insineratehymn *is a great title. Where did you come up with that?*

That would be my merchandise man, Big Joe. We were at his rehearsal hall, he has a band and I was over there, he was like, "you know I have been thinking of something,' and he was trying to put it together. He had thought of that title

years ago and mentioned it to me, and I had told him I liked it and would use it. He remembered and he held me to it to use it. He said, "you better fucking use that before somebody else does!"

I thought you wanted to record last summer and get it out by the end of 1999.

Well, when you try to plot your future in this business it is kind of hard. You like to do things one way, then you have four individuals and a record company involved. We did want to have it out by the beginning of the year. Record companies, they say "OK, give us a time." So I go "OK, five months." I always shoot small because if I say ten months, they don't want to keep me living for ten months. It's a game; you have to play their game. I'm not going to let any goddamn record company, who don't promote my band the way it should be promoted, dictate when I will put out an album. I will give it to them when I am ready.

If they agreed to your big amount of money, would you stay with them?

Of course. Of all the independents out there, they are probably the most reliable as far as paying you goes. Their numbers might not be right all the time, and I think they should invest a little more in our band. The way they work is they pump the piss out of you when you first are signed, but unless they see astronomical sales, they do not put any money into you. If you start selling astronomically, then they put more money into you, because it means more money for them. One thing about my band is it sells itself because of the name. The kids buy the records not because they see the ads in magazines, but because it is **DEICIDE**. Roadrunner rarely places ads for us. We get like one ad in the magazines for our records. I don't know what they are doing for your magazine, but I don't ever see any ads for our records.

"One thing about my band is it sells itself because of the name. The kids buy the records not because they see the ads in magazines, but because it is **DEICIDE**".

What would be an ideal tour for* DEICIDE*? Would it be headlining or going out with a bigger band.

I don't know, it depends on who the other band was. I do not have a problem opening up for people. People seem to think I am mister headliner. Opening up means I am free to scoop up all the pussy afterwards. I am open for anything these days.

AnneMarie Bowman

Photos: Frank White

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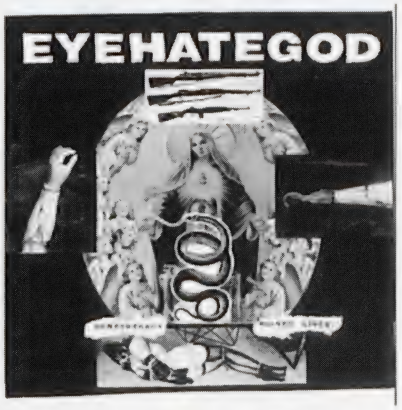

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THE CHASM

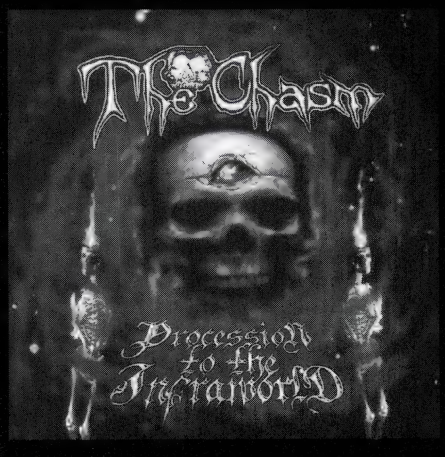
"I wanted to take the band to the next level and our situation in Mexico wasn't improving with economics and whatnot; it's really fucked."

Photos: Jeff Wolfe

ANGELCORPSE is dead (GOD DAMMIT PETE)! Thankfully we have bands like **THE CHASM** around to keep things vitalized and cutting edge. One thing that front man Daniel Corchado wants the metal citizenry to know is that **THE CHASM** is not a newcomer to the scene. Originating in 1993, after his regression from CENOTAPH (Mexico), Daniel set out with the intentions of delivering something new to the overly saturated and bland death metal movement. The result can be heard on all four of **THE CHASM**'s long player's (*Procession to the Infraworld* being the newest). The band harnesses a sound that is a combination of death, black, and old school thrash. Fans of BEWITCHED, BLOOD FEAST, USURPER, DISSECTION or SACRIFICE are forewarned! You will be enthralled and enchanted by the likes of **THE CHASM,** so do yourself a favor and run away from home and join the ever-growing deathcult!

A lot of people remember Daniel's contribution to INCANTATION, so I started off by asking him if he felt that this might have helped in **THE CHASM**'s ascent. "Yeah, I would say so. When you play in a band that has a very strong name, it's definitely going to help and a lot of people might think **THE CHASM** has the same style, but the styles are completely different. If they are looking for the brutal death metal of INCANTATION they might be disappointed, but hopefully they will be surprised in a good way. We are obscure death metal, but I think it's a bit more progressive. Its not one hundred percent original, but I originated **THE CHASM** to create something that is original and authentic. There is no point in playing something that has been done a hundred times before. Of course you have your influences, but you have your own personality that you have to reflect that in your songs. For me **THE CHASM** is a leader and not a follower like a bunch of sheep following what is trendy. There's a lot of young kids that just want to sound like their hero, and maybe they will make an evolution in a couple of years, but everyone sounds like everyone else and that's what happened in the early 90's with death metal. It became weak and cheesy".

Originally inaugurated in Mexico the band found themselves limited to certain venues and crowds and stuck using shitty equipment, thus relocating to the windy city of Chicago was a natural furtherance. "I wanted to take the band to the next level and our situation in Mexico wasn't improving with economics and whatnot; it's really fucked. You have to worry about eating and getting money and it's really hard there. I think our first couple of albums were really



ahead of their time for a Mexican band and I don't think a lot of people could comprehend what we were trying to do. We would play shows and the response was really bad. After awhile, we decided to quit playing shows. We started concentrating on writing music and making the band stronger, and that's what we are doing right now. We aren't trying to get on a tour, it would be great to tour, but it's not our priority. Anyway, I already had some friends here in Chicago and that's why we decided to move here. The scene here is pretty good. It's pretty strong compared to other cities in America. I'm very proud of the scene, and there is a lot of dedicated metalheads here".

The portrait of the human skull has always been a fixture within the confines of metal. **THE CHASM** is a band that once again embraces this image on their album covers and in their logo. Is the cranium the tip of the hat to IRON MAIDEN's Eddie? "I wish (laughter). It's a representation of the deathcult, and a representation of the lyrical cult of **THE CHASM**. It is something that has been overdone and something that is cheesy, but for me it's your real inner self. You were born with a purpose and one of your goals is to turn into a skeleton and eventually turn to dust. It's like a castle or a temple for your soul when you are finished with your journey through life. That's my idea and belief, sometimes you need peace and rest and the skull is like a house where you can go. It's the real cult of death and I understand everyone has used cults, but to be a metal head is to be in a cult. I know everybody has used the skull as a representation, but I don't give a shit because I have my own reasons and beliefs, and that's the representation of **THE CHASM**".

With the deathcult unleashed upon the world, what are Daniel's plans for world domination? "We'll see how things go because we were supposed to play some shows' with MAYHEM, but the promoters fucked that up. I was hoping that the exposure would lead to bigger tours, but it didn't happen so we will have to keep trying. It's almost like a curse. We are doing our heavy metal of death and if this is the way its going to be then so be it. Our next album is almost complete and that shows that this is our main priority to create music. Hopefully, someone will have the balls to take us out on the road because obviously we're not rich and we don't have the money to put together a tour by ourselves. We'll always keep trying because everybody has problems and gets frustrated, but even if its good or bad we have our priorities and we will keep up with them no matter what".

Micha Kite

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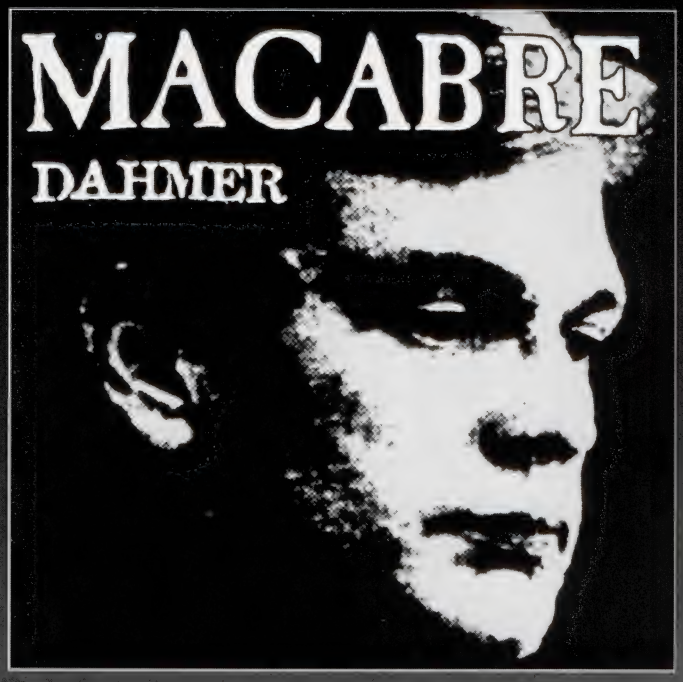

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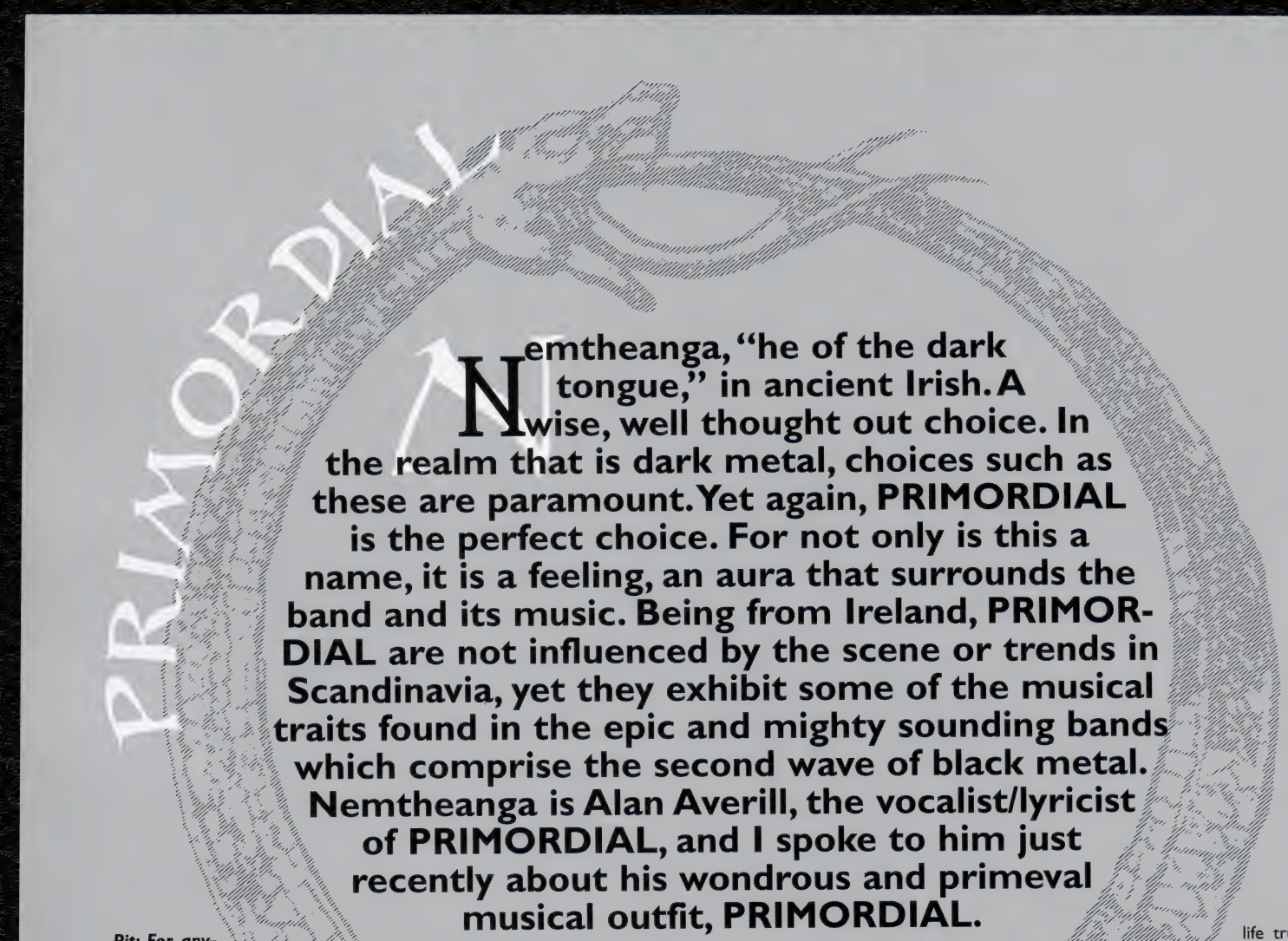

Nemtheanga, "he of the dark tongue," in ancient Irish. A wise, well thought out choice. In the realm that is dark metal, choices such as these are paramount. Yet again, PRIMORDIAL is the perfect choice. For not only is this a name, it is a feeling, an aura that surrounds the band and its music. Being from Ireland, PRIMORDIAL are not influenced by the scene or trends in Scandinavia, yet they exhibit some of the musical traits found in the epic and mighty sounding bands which comprise the second wave of black metal. Nemtheanga is Alan Averill, the vocalist/lyricist of PRIMORDIAL, and I spoke to him just recently about his wondrous and primeval musical outfit, PRIMORDIAL.

Pit: For anyone in America who has not heard of* PRIMORDIAL *give a brief history of the band.

Nemtheanga Averill: The genesis of the band goes back to 1987 when the bassist and guitarist started jamming together, playing thrash and metal covers. The music became more death metal, and in 1991 I joined the band. At this time, I would compare the music to something like GROTESQUE, SAMAEL, AUTOPSY, NIHILIST, or something. In 1993 we recorded our first and only demo *Dark Romanticism,* which went on to sell 1100 copies in the underground. In 1991 we were more drawn to the second wave of black metal and our demo was essentially part of that movement. We received several offers but the best at that time seemed to be with Cacophonous Records from the UK. We recorded *Imrama* in late 1994 and it was released in autumn of 1995 (being re-released later this year on Hammerheart). We only signed for one album to them, so after some problems we moved to Misanthropy. The years 95-98 were a frustrating period as there was much conflict and turmoil within the band. We ousted the malign influence of the drummer and since then we have not looked back. Our last recording with him was a split 10" with KATATONIA in 1997. In early 1998, we recorded *A Journeys End* for Misanthropy Records; they as you may know, ceased operations later that year. We moved to Hammerheart Records and in 1999 released *The Burning Season* MCD and now in May 2000, our third and most accomplished full length, *Spirit the Earth Aflame*.

How would you describe your spirituality and how it influences your music?

My "spirituality…" as you say, does influence the music in every way. These songs, and the words within, are inextricably linked to me and my outlook upon life. I, as I have said before, view all natural pre-xtian cultures as having a similar syntax. I rather see myself in the macro then microcosmic, as part of the universal, yet distinctively aware of my surrounding and culture. I see man as the God and the constant furthering and bettering of ones self to achieve god-like status. The fulfillment of ones' desires, and the striving to empower your will. It may be a path that brings you into conflict with the herd mentality of peoples in general, but to live life truly as a wolf among sheep, living as your will decrees. My essence of what we may call spirituality may be what others may call dark or arcane. However an understanding of the natural equilibrium and it's laws, and of understanding creation and destruction and their place in the universe. I uphold the individualizing tendencies within man. Yet, I also understand the harsh and cruel nature of the world. If that makes sense to you, as in a public forum one cannot spill one's personal guts to the hilt.

I would like to ask about the lyrics; you write them. What do they mean to you? Do you write them first, before the music or do you wait to hear music to inspire you to write lyrics? How do you write your lyrics, do they just pop into your head after being inspired by something? Is there any kind of message or knowledge you are trying to convey with your lyrics?

I write all the lyrics, I cannot over-state the importance of these lyrics to me. I write when I have to write. As songs are being pieced together, I try to place a lyric that suits the mood and atmosphere of the song and then work on the structure. Inspiration can come from anything. From people, places, and passages in time. From my ethics and beliefs, my emotional states and relation to what is inside and around of me. Poets, authors, history and historians, films, many, many things, as with songwriting I feel there are no rules, nor dissections of the muse. With the new lyrics, they predominately deal with the concept of being the catalyst for change, inside and around yourself. Sweeping away stagnation and questioning the lies taught to you as truth, preaching Vengeance from on high. Claiming the higher ground and indeed standing your ground. These new lyrics are far stronger and more focused than before. They are harder and harsher.

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AnneMarie Bowman

THE KINGS OF NEW YORK HARDCORE HAVE RETURNED WITH THEIR FOURTH ALBUM ENTITLED, HOLD IT DOWN. THIS ALBUM IS A CROWNING ACHIEVEMENT FOR **MADBALL.** SOUNDING MORE LIKE THEIR ALBUM, DEMONSTRATING MY STYLE, HEY HAVE COMBINED THE OLD SCHOOL ENERGY, WITH GREAT PRODUCTION , TO PUT FORTH ONE OF THE BEST HARDCORE ALBUMS OF THE YEAR! WE TALKED WITH HOYA ABOUT ALL THE THINGS GOING DOWN WITHIN THE **MADBALL** CAMP RIGHT NOW.

Pit: So, tell me how the recording of this new album went, how it differs from your previous albums?

Hoya Roc: The process was kind of the same. When we were writing the record, we had more of an idea of what we wanted to do. This is our fourth album, so we kinda knew what our style was already, all the studio shit. We had a little better idea of what we were doing, we didn't go in there blind. Basically, we all get together and write the songs together, everybody puts their two cents in. We were a little more prepared doing this record, we actually had it all written when we went into the studio. We've never had all our material written like that before. We always were still writing in the studio on our past records.

I heard that Matt Henderson is no longer a member of the band, yet he is involved in the producing. How did this come about?

Well, he got married and we were on the road a lot. We don't make enough money on the road to support a family, so he decided to stay home. He wanted to start working on producing and engineering anyway and get into that stuff and get his life together. He is still part of **MADBALL**, he played guitar on this record as well. He even helped with the writing. He is still part of the band even though he can't be on the road. He still has input and he has a good ear. It's still a good collaboration, and works out for everybody.

It has been a while since you've been on the road, what are you're plans for touring for this album?

We did a couple of weeks in Europe recently, and now we are home for a little bit trying to get things set up. We will do a full tour of the States first probably, then hit South America, Europe again, all over. Hopefully by December.

What do you think about the resurgence of heavier music being mass accepted?

It's getting big! It's crazy! It's definitely not what we do, you know, but whatever. I just like that it's heavy music. It's not hardcore but heavy music period. I'm into heavy music, but I would like to see more hardcore bands out there. I just want it to be recognized.

Would you consider touring with one of those bands?

We'll play with anybody! That's never been an issue, you know? Just because we're hardcore band, that doesn't mean that we don't listen to anything else. A lot of times, overseas, we played with a lot of different bands like, IRON MAIDEN, MACHINE HEAD, and KORN.

Elaine Rawlings

Epitaph

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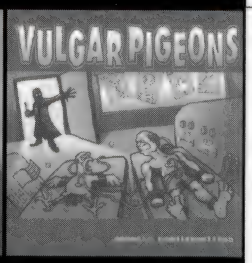

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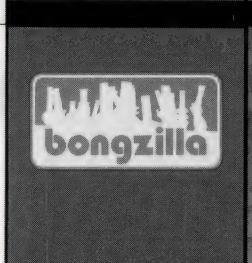

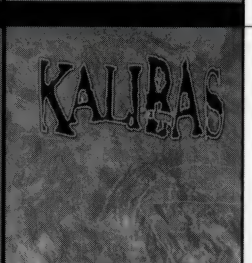

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THE BERZERKER

Ugly, violent, and hateful. These are just a few of the many terms often used to describe the trademark THE BERZERKER sound. Musically akin to a heavier GODFLESH meets CARCASS, the band ultimately redefines the term "extreme." Just give a good listen to the self-titled debut on Earache to get my point! Filled with 46 minutes of nihilistic diatribes, these industrial grindcore terrorists are about one thing and one thing only; total annihilation of humanity by any means possible. Propaganda for the new millennium perhaps? Maybe.. then again, the world is destined to end sooner or later whether we like it or not, and THE BERZERKER merely serves to remind us all that. This disc may very well be the tool that dissects and exposes us to be the catalysts of decay we really are. Thus, only the faint of heart should proceed with caution.

Pit: Why did you choose to name the band* THE BEZERKER*? If you don't mind me asking, just what is a "berzerker" and what's the significance behind the name?

The Bezerker::The Berzerker is a group of sentient beings more powerful than man. We chose the name **THE BERZERKER** after the "Berserk" or bare-sark Norse warriors. The physical appearance of the berserk was one calculated to present an image of terror. The berserker was thought to have assumed the strength and ferocity of the bear. By the twelfth century, the berserk with his Odinnic religion, his animalistic appearance, his inhuman frenzy upon the battlefield, disappeared. The berserk, like his patron deity Odin, was forced to yield to the dissolution of pagan society and the advent of the White Christ. In this age the term 'berzerk' has acquired a more general meaning.

Interestingly enough, the music comes across more or less as industrial deathgrind. Yet to the average death metal purist, using industrial elements would be totally unheard of. However, taking into consideration that* THE BERZERKER *is your one true artistic vision, what purpose does combining the two serve for you?

Death metal is my background. I have always been into death metal, and I always will be. I did not see it as a fad, and I was not attracted to it to shock others around me in a desperate cry for attention. Towards the mid 90's the death metal scene seem to die out somewhat, and almost all of the bands from the late 80's and early 90's seem to lose their direction. Around the same time I was exposed to hardcore gabba, and was attracted to the violent forces that are in play when gabba kicks are fed through a large P.A. I am always attracted to extremity in music, be it extreme speedcore records, or Japanese noise-core. They are all based on the same premise, and that is, in their own worlds they are doing something with a much greater intensity level then what currently surrounds them. Utilizing industrial sounds with more sonic impact then acoustic sounds can only serve to heighten the level of intensity.

Considering the heavy use of sampling and other electronic elements used in the production of this recording, how would you perform these tracks live? What would the live setting be like, or rather what type of atmosphere would you try to convey and how would you go about achieving that?

We trigger the kick drums and play all the samples live via a keyboard. **THE BERZERKER** has plans to tour this record across the planet. The live show is a major part of informing the world of the sheer power of **THE BERZERKER**, and to increase it's global awareness. It is also our chance to manifest in the flesh, and to voice our disgust in the most forceful way possible onto any unsuspecting audience. The live band currently consists of eight live members, these include three vocalists, two guitars, one bass player, one drummer and one samplist. Currently (as of the end of July) we are without a live drummer. We have five drummers currently learning the material, and as soon as the slot is filled we shall commence touring both the USA and Europe.

Do you suppose that one of the many reasons why more and more musicians are relying on drum machines and sampling because it's simpler and more convenient as opposed to forming a real band? What do you feel specifically has lead you to follow the path you are on now?

As opposed to forming a REAL band? I was unaware that having a real band

must consist of using a live drummer. I was a death metal drummer in the early 90`s, and due to a horrific car accident, that I should not have survived, I was left unable to continue playing the drums. I was forced into selling my various drum kits and purchasing samplers and sequencers to continue making music. I was unable to find a suitable drummer for the recording of **THE BERZERKER** album and chose to program a lot of the beats that I used to play when I was drumming. It was only after the record was released (through Earache Records) that I was able to cull suitable drummers from other established bands.

How much of the "music" you create is actually improvisational? For instance, how do you go about taking various sounds and effects and putting them altogether? Is there a blueprint formulated way before you go into the studio, or do you sort of spontaneously piece things together as you go along?

I usually write the song first and add the samples last to fill out the rest of the song. But, there is no blueprint to speak of. Sometimes I might create a sound that inspires a song, but the creation of a song is definitely NOT improvisational.

Given the choice and unlimited responsibility, would you rather cure the ills of this world or destroy it completely thus negating our entire existence as we speak? Why?

THE BERZERKER is not designed to add, it is designed to take. Take the diseased shell of the mundane human rituals and habits that exist on this planet, and destroy them to reveal a being with a greater purity that man. Some achieve this via self mutilation, drugs or violence. We achieve a more intense result in the form of music.

Rob Aloi

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The next glorious dimension for headbangers obsessed with true metal tunes is here. *Afterlife* blazes an astounding trail of blistering anthems and thunderous rhythms while guitars and keyboards duel making it the band's most memorable release to date. Nocturnal Rites hold the scepter of second wave melodic speed metal.

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A Tribute To Judas Priest - Volume 2

Delivering The Goods is the second US Century Media tribute to the Metal Gods. Featuring Blind Guardian, Gamma Ray, Iron Savior, Angra, Virgin Steele, Saxon, U.D.O., Devin Townsend, Stratovarius and many more. This album is a sure way to enjoy some of the greatest metal songs ever through the eyes of newer, soon to be legends themselves.

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Enlighten The Darkness

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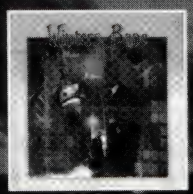

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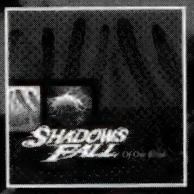
Heart Of A Killer

JAG PANZER
Thane To The Throne



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HALFORD
RESURRECTION

Rob Halford's return to metal has signaled to some that metal may once again be restored to its former shining glory circa 1985. Regardless, Halford's debut shows that the spirit is alive and well. After two records with the PANTERA-esque FIGHT and the ill-fated industrial project TWO, which teamed Rob up with an unlikely ally in NINE INCH NAILS' Trent Reznor, he has returned to the place where he belongs.

Pit: You're back. Why did you leave?

Rob Halford: It's just that part of me. This is what I'm about, I'm always looking and searching for new things to explore. It's this part of me that's always searching for new things. I did a lot of that in PRIEST when you look at what PRIEST was about. It's a multi-headed animal, one minute it's "Turbo Lover" the next minute it's "Freewheel Burning" it's all over the place. It's always been in my system.

How did your relationship with Trent Reznor end?

We hit the obvious wall, where do we go after the first single? We clashed heads on that level. I was doing a show in Switzerland, shitty promotion for the show. I was feeling absolutely dead inside. It was a real stretch for me musically anyway. For the first time ever, I just sat back and let Trent and Rave (Oglive) do the record, and I thought it was a really cool record. If you pull away all of the opinion and critique and just listen to it for the musical value, it's a very good record. But, when I came out into the live world performing it, it just was not happening. I went out there and I tried and tried and I just wasn't connecting. Things that I feel when I'm usually out there and I'm screaming and wailing and sweating and the blood's boiling and the band's pumping. I just wasn't getting it. So what is the point? It's two different worlds. The writing and the recording and what you hear out of the speakers. Once you take it out live, that has to be the pinnacle of the moment. I just felt flat. While that was going on, the metal thing was still there inside of me. It has just stirred up the fire some more. I just had to get back into it. It wasn't even a question or a choice. It was the obvious thing to do.

"Resurrection" is pretty inspired. What inspired you?

(The time away), it's let all the right things happen. To allow me to come back and do it right. Now I listen to it and I take away all the self-critique I'm my worst critic and I'm super-analytical about what goes on in the studio. I over tear things apart. Now I'm just listening to it and enjoying it. I can hear the sincerity and the pureness and the genuine honesty of the performance. All the real nuances of playing. The real feeling when you look at the band and go 'fuck yeah,' that's really happening right now. That's the real deal.

What was the process used to build this band?

Pat and Mike sent me CDs and videos of the live stuff that they've done. It was an intuitive thing. I had auditioned players when I saw Pat and Mike I thought this was the genesis of something that could be really cool. I spoke to them on the

phone and the next thing was to meet in person. That clicked. The next question was 'Will we write together?' That was the next big step. Then it just poured out day after day after day.

The lyrics seem to be the most personal things you've written. How did you approach the writing this time?

They are unusual for me. I generally live in a world of illusion, fantasy and escapism, although The FIGHT stuff was more angst ridden. The TWO stuff was very bizarre. When we came to talk about that, (Roy) Z (said), 'tell people what's been going on' and I was like 'what do you mean?' I was like, 'that isn't going to work.' He was like, 'trust me, it will work.'

So it was difficult for you?

Yes. You sit there with a pen and piece of paper and go 'this is how I felt two years ago, I felt like shit today…' You can sing that, but you have to be a little bit more interesting. You've got to grab more of the emotional situation outside of simple, precise language. You can say that thing but there is more than one way to say it. I did a lot of pondering what I was going through, what I had gone through and slowly found my way into writing the way that I wrote "Resurrection."

Photo: Frank White

On the track "Resurrection" the line 'son of Judas…' it is as if you have made peace with yourself, have you made peace with the guys in PRIEST?

I have.

Do they share that sentiment?

We're getting there. It was tough for everybody. We are rebuilding the friendship. It's tough. I wish it could be simple. We're just funny people, musicians.

Why did you decide to use a producer rather than produce it yourself?

The best moments are when someone tells me to get back and do it again. I don't know what I can do until a producer is cracking the whip. I need to be driven. So when Roy Z says everything's great, but just look at this line here, it's just not right. 'Go back and do it again'. That's what a producer does. I couldn't grasp the concept. I produced *War of Words* (FIGHT) and it was a disaster.

Regardless of the project, your performances have always been inspired. Is there a song or a record that, when you look back on it, you feel was not your best effort or you were going through the motions?

I don't think so because that's not the way I am. You look back at your career and everything that's been done and there are blips along the way but isn't that human? Isn't that what it's all about? It's the reality of it.

Do you have a favorite new band?

EMPEROR! I love them to death.

E.J. Johantgen

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ARCTIC

nile

It is a supreme irony that, when **NILE** guitarist/vocalist Karl Sanders founded the band with bassist/vocalist Chief Spires and drummer Pete Hammoura in 1993, he'd already done time in a number of metal outfits, none of which had gone anywhere – and, tired of having his hopes dashed, he went into **NILE** with no expectations of any outside recognition. "I had no concept of getting a record deal or anything," he points out. "I just wanted to go into the rehearsal space and make music that I liked, with my own influences."

Those influences, as we've all found out, mix his time-honored love for death metal with a wholly different realm: the sounds and stories of ancient Egypt. Growing up a fan of movies like *Ben-Hur*, *The Ten Commandments*, and *Cleopatra*, awestruck by the "grandiose scale" of pre-Christian civilizations, Sanders came to study Egyptology more seriously as an adult, and has worked the mysteries of the dark continent's deserts into the most futuristic and forward-thinking of music.

The rest is already metal history. Craig Rowe, of the now defunct Visceral Productions, released two EP's, *Festivals of Atonement* and *Ramses Bringer of War* (recently reissued on one CD from Relapse, entitled *In the Beginning*), with an eye toward a full-length album, a plan derailed by Rowe's decision to fold Visceral. Relapse stepped in, and in 1998, *Amongst the Catacombs of Nephren-Ka* was released, going on to enjoy success undreamed of by either band or label. Everywhere you looked, it seemed, **NILE** was on tour, both here and abroad, spreading their unique, historically-tinged death metal assault.

"It's kind of mind-blowing," he points out, "three thousand years ago, someone did a tomb carving, and now that's on our T-shirt and some guy's walking around in the present day wearing it." This mingling of the past, present and future is even more surreal at **NILE**'s live shows, where, amid the chaotic flurry of guitar, bass and drums, Sanders, aided by his computer, is triggering digitized samples of monks' choirs, ancient handmade instruments and ominous classical scores.

Sanders quickly and vehemently defends the band's use of technology in a live setting, should any nay Sayers be found. "Look at our situation. If we could even find a keyboard player who could play this stuff, and trigger those parts, either they wouldn't want to play brutal death metal, or if they did, we wouldn't be able to afford them. Touring is rough, and that's one more person to feed, one more bed, one more person drinking all the beer. I mean, the only way to authentically reproduce the record would be to bring out all these extra musicians, which would cost a fortune. What we do now is the best solution we have at this level.

"It *can* get a bit hairy sometimes," he conceded, recalling **NILE**'s first New York gig. "My PC crashed, and we're standing there waiting for it to fuckin' boot back up. People in the crowd were making Bill Gates jokes. I've bought a UPS [power supply backup], but when we went to Europe, we couldn't get it to adapt to their 50 cycle, 220 volt supply. We had all kinds of problems, but anyone who's seen us knows we're a legitimate live band. I mean, triggering samples with pedals while playing a guitar part at 250 beats per minute, and trying to sing brutal death metal…" He finishes with a slight scoff, as if inviting any detractors to try such a feat themselves.

And speaking of touring, the band has done more than any dozen typical underground bands, including five full tours of the US alone in support of *Catacombs*. "Metal tests your dedication, man. [The touring] pretty much ruined all our lives," he shrugs, referring to their financial situations back home. "We came back, tried to recover as best we could, and started to work on this record." For Hammoura, the price of the road was even greater – he injured his shoulder while on tour, but kept playing hour-long sets every night. "Basically, he gave his neck and shoulder to metal," Sanders says. Upon returning home, Hammoura finally sought medical attention, only to find that he'd suffered serious, possibly permanent, muscle and tendon damage.

With recording sessions looming for the band's second Relapse platter, *Black Seeds of Vengeance*, Pete wasn't able to perform to his own standards. From the sounds of it, his future behind the kit is uncertain. Sanders says, with a tinge of sadness, "he may recover. I hope he does." Veteran session drummer Derek Roddy stepped in to record the bulk of *Black Seeds*, while former ANGEL CORPSE basher Tony Laureano will fill in for live dates.

So what about *Black Seeds of Vengeance*, due out in September and certain to be one of the undergrounds most highly anticipated death metal offerings? "There's a lot of growth," Sanders says, understating the case. "Just a band who's had a few more years to grow." Based on a sneak preview of the recording, I can safely attest that "growth" is hardly the word for the jaw-dropping explosion of talent, creativity, and brutality found on *Black Seeds*. The Egyptian influences are more seamlessly integrated into death metal. Fast, brutal and dizzying enough to hang with, and arguably even surpass, the likes of KRISIUN, ANGEL CORPSE and HATE ETERNAL. It's destined to top many Top 10 lists at the end of this year, and if Sanders had had his way, it would have been even more ambitious.

"We had the usual budget and time constraints," he recalls. "I wrote a fifteen minute epic, this monstrous, ancient epic, with tons of musicians, and brutal parts, four movements. We didn't have the means to do it, we had to scrap it." Upon reflecting that the remaining 45 minutes was a harrowing enough journey as-is, the band "went over the sequencing very carefully" and decided *Black Seeds of Vengeance* was enough to digest in its present form. "My first idea was to go back and record this epic for an EP later, but I got outvoted by the label. I guess it's gonna go on the next record."

Sanders is proud of the authenticity of his lyrics and music, and the reflection they are on his study and knowledge of Egyptology. "When we brought [the new record] home and played it for people, they were like 'oh, it's too brutal. Where's all this Egypt stuff you keep talking about?' But if you play some of those riffs on an acoustic guitar, with finger cymbals, you know what it'll sound like? Belly dancing music!" For *Black Seeds*, Sanders has also written extensive liner notes explaining each lyrics meaning and historical accuracy. "I wish I'd done that for the last record," he groans. "I would have saved myself about a million emails. So many people emailed me – 'these lyrics are so out there, what are you talking about?' I've legitimately researched this – a lot of work goes into it."

One can't help notice a certain, shall we say, phallocentric quality to some of the band's lyrics ("You will drink the black sperm/Of my vengeance," from "The Black Hand of Set;" "Hack off their testicles/And cut their phalluses to pieces," from the new tune "Black Seeds of Vengeance;" hell, there's a whole song called "Masturbating the War God"!). But, as Sanders points out, this song is a historically accurate depiction of ithyphallic sacrifice (literally, impalement of prisoners of war on giant stone phalluses), part of a phallocentric mythology that was more prevalent than is widely known, but was routinely censored and even destroyed by early Christian archaeologists who discovered these graphic, shocking portraits and monuments. "It's a real tragedy, what happened to these artifacts," Sanders says. "Only recently have there been restorations, to their original form. They're replastering statues, repainting walls, removing brass plates that were put on, to cover penises, basically. What the fuck's the big deal about seeing a painting of some damn penises? It's the Christian mindset, look at the Crusades, the fighting between Protestants and Catholics even today. It's fucked up."

Now, **NILE** is setting out for another grueling round of touring – but this time, as well-known and respected stalwarts of the scene. Their first US jaunt for the new album will be with CANNIBAL CORPSE, following a heralded stint with MORBID ANGEL last year, a tour they were personally invited on by that band. "It's such a fucking honor, man," Sanders says sincerely. "CANNIBAL and MORBID, who else could you ask to tour with? What else can you expect from the Metal Gods? Before I met these bands, [and bands like] ENSLAVED, IMMORTAL, I thought 'these guys must be ten feet tall!' But you find out that they're just guys who get up and brush their teeth in the morning like everyone else. They're great people, it's a brotherhood. None of us are making money doing this. We could seriously make more money working at McDonald's. Guys like that do this because they love metal, and they love playing music."

But aren't there now people coming up to **NILE** with the same hero-worship and idolatry? "Man, I dunno, that gets weird, signing autographs and stuff," Sanders says with humility. "I don't feel ten feet tall. To me, it's just one more metal fan talking to another one. I just happen to put my two cents worth in and play in a band. It's more of an honor to *me* to meet a guy who works forty hours, and goes out and buys the record. It's like, '*I* want *your* autograph! You're *my* hero!' Promoters, agents, club owners, those guys can burn in hell. It's the guy who comes to a show, and buys a t-shirt, and gets into metal, who keeps metal alive. That's who it's all about."

Keith Bergman

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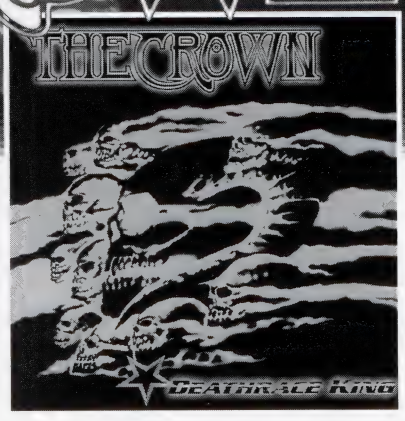


Since the early 1990's, Sweden has been one of the dominating places when it comes to producing quality metal bands. In fact, many of today's metal bands don't come from English speaking countries. The metal scene is really at a crossroads, as the quality is very well balanced and leveled. THE CROWN was originally called THE CROWN OF THORNS, and released two albums under that moniker. Metal Blade stepped in, and secured a worldwide distribution for the band, as they released the next two albums on the mighty Blade. *Hell Is Here* introduced THE CROWN to American listeners. The band currently released *Deathrace King* and is promoting the new record by touring the U.S. for the first time. THE CROWN's rhythm section, bassist Magnus Olsfelt and drummer Janne Saarenpaa, give the story away.

Janne Saarenpaa: We formed back in 1990 as THE CROWN OF THORNS. It was basically me and Magnus, then we found other members eventually. Magnus Olsfelt: We were influenced by SLAYER, METALLICA and all the death metal bands that were coming out at that time.

Janne: It took us two demo tapes to get signed, one in '93 and one in '94.

First, you got signed to a Swedish label called Black Sun.

Janne: Black Sun is a small label in Gothenburg. They are the label responsible for releasing bands like GROTESQUE and AT THE GATES. So, they promoted the early Gothenburg sound.

***Your first album was called* The Burning.**

Janne: It was our first time in the professional studio. We were young, and we were learning at the time.

Magnus: That album has the material that came from our demos, and some newer material. It's like a best of from the first five years or so. The songs are still good, and we like to play them live. We don't play them as much on the current tour because we only have a small amount of time to play. Actually, all of the songs we put on our albums we're very proud of. There are no fillers, just the songs we really like.

***You followed that with* Eternal Death.**

Magnus: The main difference between our first and second album is that we wrote all of the songs in a row. On our first album we wrote songs over a long period of time and this time everything went fast. *Eternal Death* is sort of a conceptual album. All the songs are very long, and the lyrics are very dark.

So, how did you end up on Metal Blade?

Magnus: Metal Blade saw us on our first tour and they liked the band. They approached us, and we ended up going with them.

Janne: When we started working with Metal Blade everything went very fast. They were very effective at spreading our name and promoting us.

Magnus: Metal Blade didn't change our band in any way, in fact the music on our next album, *Hell Is Here*, was already written before we signed with them. They only promoted us very well.

Hell Is Here was probably the first album that many people got to know you from.

Magnus: Yes, they have a bigger and better distribution. We started doing a lot of interviews. We spoke with people from all over the world.

The new album Deathrace King is making strong waves on U.S. soil.

Magnus: I think it's the best one we did so far, we're very proud of it. It's my private masterpiece. I think the music speaks for itself.

How did you get Tomas Lindberg (of AT THE GATES fame) to guest on the album?

Magnus: Tomas is a friend of ours for many years now. We toured together with him. He is in a band called SACRILEGE. It was logical for us to work with him. He's just a great guy, and we all love AT THE GATES, so it was an honor.

Your sound on the new album is very mixed with what American bands are doing; you don't have that definite Swedish sound, how come?

Magnus: I think it's because we have the same line up for a long time, so we tend to change and grow, and that's what we sound like. We have this line up since the very beginning, so we're able to communicate with each other very well. The sound is just the result of how we get along.

So, what happened to your name?

Janne: There was an American band that was called **CROWN OF THORNS**. They faxed us and told us to change the name, but we didn't think much of it. They're nothing anyway. Then they faxed us again later saying that they're working with Gene Simmons of KISS and their lawyers would be looking into that matter. At that point we realized that we don't have the money to spend on lawyers, and we don't want to battle anyone in court, so we shortened our name to **THE CROWN.**

Mark Kadzielawa

GLASSJAW is a Roadrunner band, but what makes them special is the fact that they are completely different and unique from everyone of that labels bands. Finally, with the glut of "metal" bands spewing out of just about every bigger label, GLASSJAW comes along to offer you a different perspective on heavy music. The music itself is not exactly the heaviest as far as brutality goes but it comes forth with so much anger, it might actually transcend some bands that are considered "brutal". Do yourself a favor and check this band out, you won't be disappointed!

GLASSJAW

Pit: Tell me how you got hooked up with Roadrunner.

Daryl Palumbro: We had played a bunch of shows with VISION OF DISORDER in our hometown. They are our good friends, mentors if you will. Anyway, Mike Gitter, A&R for Roadrunner, was at these shows. He came out and decided he liked us a lot. So he pursued us and kept talking to us for like two years after that. One day he called me and said "Ross Robinson heard your tape and wants to come out and see you rehearse, he's really into it"

So, Ross came out to see us rehearse because he was looking for his third band,[for his offshoot, I Am Recordings].

So what are your plans are far as touring?

We want to tour and promote this album as much as possible. We want to just tour nonstop. I don't want to sit at home for nine months! I want to be on the road for nine months straight! We just want to promote this record and give everybody a taste of what we're about. We're not a new band, but we're new on this level. None of the readers of Pit really know who we are. I want the kids to see what we're about and like it. I want to make friends all over the States and have kids like the record and network it. This is all new to us and we want to start touring hard.

With everyone using Ross Robinson as a producer, how was your experience with him?

Well, we went to Indigio to record. It was the most spiritual experience of my life. The most amazing, cleansing experience of my life. He was throwing me around. Smashing windows, fucking candles, glasses, the drums. He was pushing my guitar players over and screaming. You can hear him screaming on different parts of the record.

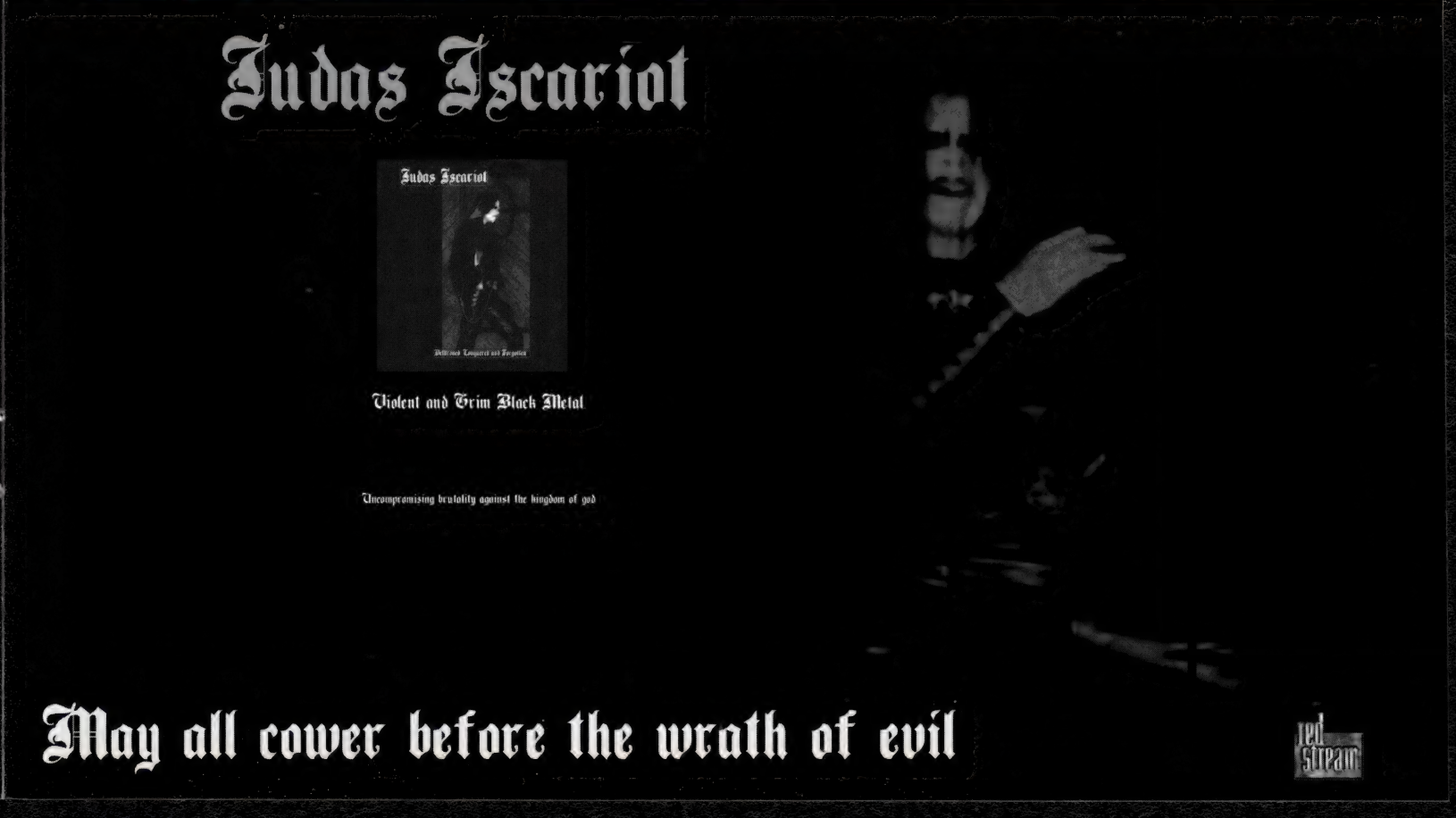
Do you feel that you will receive a lot of promotion for this album, in light of all the bands on Roadrunner these days?

I'm not too worried. We know everybody at Roadrunner is into this record. I know that if they didn't love it, they wouldn't be as moved to get behind it. I'm confident that our record is going to get pushed a lot.

I know you have Crohn's Disease. Do you think it will inhibit you in any way, say like touring?

It did in the past. The past few years of my life have been rough because of it. It was like luggage because of it. It was luggage I couldn't shake. It's there, it's my worst enemy. I lived with it, it was my Siamese twin, a being that is in my body. Crohn's Disease is the war that is being fought over my body, within my body, at all my times. The last few years have been rough, hitting puberty and trying to be a teenager in high school, but you keep getting put in the hospital. Not being able to go hang out with kids because my body does things that it shouldn't. I don't think it should bother me now, I've been though a couple of surgeries and I'm heavily medicated. I really think I can put it away now. A lot of it has to do with stress. The stress part I'm taking care of and I'm eating a lot healthier. Ross gave me a diet, he had done so much more for me than just having to do with the band. I don't want it to come back and I think I'm hating it enough that it won't come back. Plus the surgeries and medicine should help. Everyone has problems, and this is my problem. People hate their jobs, school , and have their own little problems, and I have mine.

Elaine Rawlings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PANDEMIA

Spreading The Message

PANDEMIA IS PURE EXECUTED THE WAY IT WAS MEANT TO BE. A BAND WHOSE SOUND AND STYLE IS UNTAINTED BY THE COMMERCIAL AND CLICHÉ ELEMENTS THAT ARE SO COMMON AMONG THE DEATH METAL SCENE WORLDWIDE TODAY. THEY ARE NOT SATANIC OR GORE DRIVEN, BUT BEYOND THAT, TAKING A MORE INTELLECTUAL AND UNIQUE APPROACH TOWARDS THIS ART FORM FOR REBEL SOULS. THOSE WHO TIRE OF THE SAME OLD TRENDS THAT HAVE BECOME SO MONOTONOUS, **PANDEMIA** IS REFRESHINGLY NEW. I CONTACTED THESE METAL WARRIORS TO GAIN A DEEPER PERSPECTIVE.

***Pit: Could you describe the theme, and basis of* PANDEMIA?**

(Who's talking?) **PANDEMIA** is a death metal band from the Czech Republic. We are trying to play as pure and honest music as possible, to show the right essence of this awesome music style.

The album title* Spreading the Message, *what is this in reference to?

It's about the music. We just want to spread the message that there are still some good new death metal bands who have the right feeling. Lately, I've heard many bands from the so called death metal scene and there were just a few bands that really play this music the way it's meant to be. Of course, now I'm not talking about the big masters which are untouchable but about new bands coming to the death metal scene. So, the message is to show people we are death metal warriors spreading the pure essence of music."

Due to the fact that there are no lyrics available in this album I am curious about the topics the lyrical content covers, will you enlighten us?

Well, the lyrics are very far from a typical gore or splatter stuff. We like them to be more in the psychological way, more into people's mind. They are not so straight in your face, and they are more stimulating to think about. It's really hard to describe all the ideas of our singer, you should definitely check them out and make your own opinion. The lyrics are now available on our website, so there should be no problem for people to read them.

Your style seems to contain a more straightforward approach towards death metal, no grind or gore influence. Is this a primary focus with* PANDEMIA *or just more of a natural progression?

I think it's a natural progression. We do just what we feel is right, and we try to do it as best as possible. Death metal means a lot for all of the band members and we are proud of being a part of this music. To say it better, we feel the music flowing through our veins.

Though* PANDEMIA *is pure death metal, the vocal style is more akin to black metal, no low end, making your style that much more unique, does black metal play a part as far as influence?

I don't think we are influenced by black metal. Of course, I love some bands of this style but concerning our singer, it's just a natural thing, he sings the way you can hear on the album. We don't want to have a typical deep growling, we like more the aggressive voice and that's also one of the things that makes our music more original. To be honest, I have to say that I like more of a variety with the vocals, though the vocals on *Spreading..* are really cool, and we are working on making the vocal parts on our new album more multifarious.

Shall* PANDEMIA *spread their message world wide (tours)?

Europe wide so far. We just did a big European tour with VADER, VITAL REMAINS, FLESHCRAWL and REBAELLIUN and now we are planning more gigs all over Europe for fall this year. I believe that next year we will find a way to show up in the US and to spread the message over there too.

What is to come?

Playing live as much as possible and composing our new material. As soon as the song writing is finished, we will enter a studio and record follow up to *Spreading the Message*. Be ready for the new assault of pure death metal from **PANDEMIA**!

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DREAMS OF DAMNATION

After the rumors of last year's **DARK ANGEL** reunion were squashed, many metal mongers found themselves in thrash metal mourning. For some, this is a reunion that we have waited with baited breath, for nearly a decade. Because of the situation that Jeff Becerra and Larry Lalonde are in, we know we will never see POSSESSED frothing at the mouth again. Tom G. Warrior is experimenting with a new technology, virtually melting any chance of a CELTIC FROST reunion, and Mille has forgotten who KREATOR is. Only DESTRUCTION have returned to *Curse The Gods*, so what about **DARK ANGEL,** damn it? Founding member Jim Durkin has recently reissued the *We Have Arrived* EP on Dark Realm Records and inked a deal with his new project, **DREAMS OF DAMNATION,** on Necropolis. If you still fiend for "Merciless Death," **D.O.D.** just might be the fix your looking for as it's the closest thing you'll get to **D.A.** Jim's trademark guitar riffs are ubiquitous throughout the six tracks. Hell, the CD even kicks off with guitars screaming up from the abyss just like *Darkness Descends*, what more could you ask for? Read on as Micha Kite talks with Mr. Jim Durkin about the past and present.

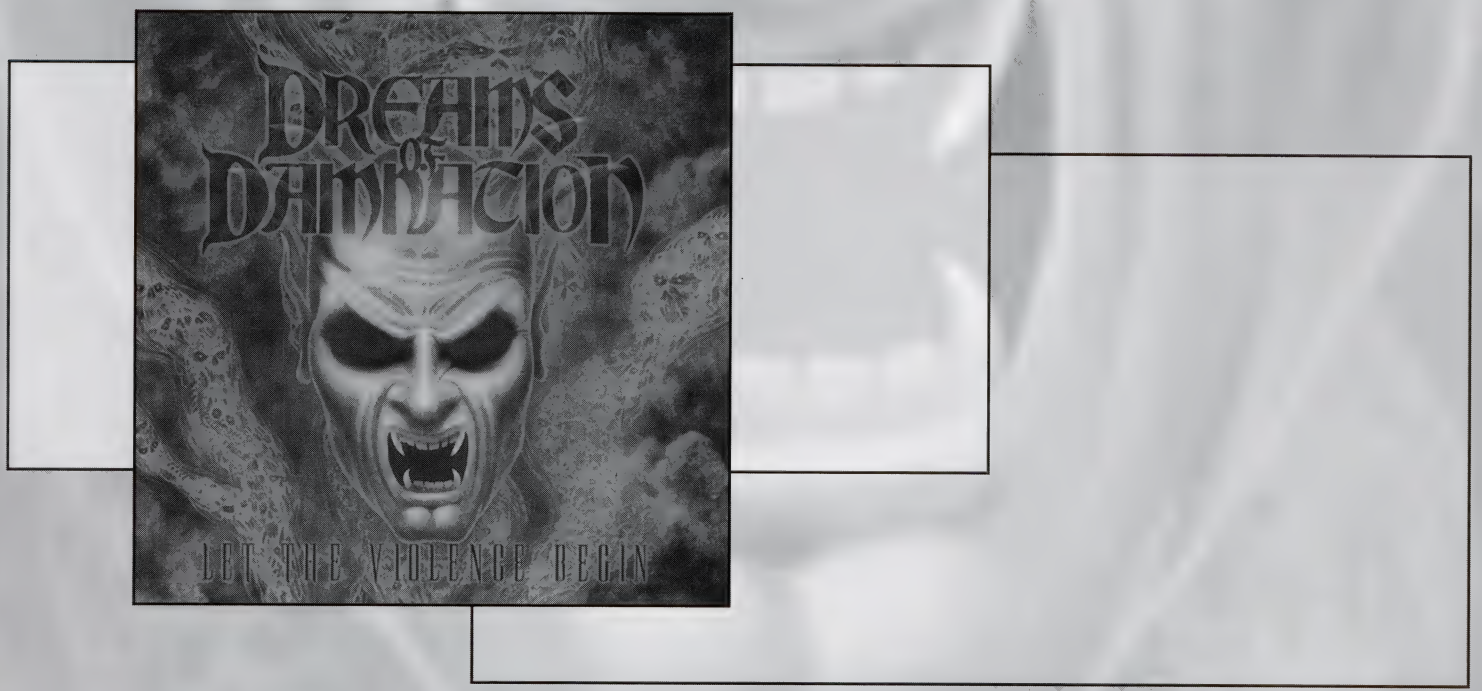
"I formed **DARK ANGEL** around the end of 1982 with Robbie Yahn, the original bass player and we played copies like MOTORHEAD, TANK, and PRIEST. We started goofing around, wrote a couple of originals and recorded a couple of horrible, horrible demos and we got Don Doty (vocals) in the band. The three of us grew up together and went to High School together, so we had a band before we had instruments (laughter). As we got better, I had written the entire *We Have Arrived* album except for part of one song and then we got Eric Meyer (guitar) in the band. From there on we got a better drummer and eventually ended up meeting Gene Hoglan (drums). It kinda just sprang from this crappy-ass garage band to what **DARK ANGEL** was. I was kind of like the chief songwriter, and when Gene joined the band it was easier because he wrote a lot of the stuff too. If you notice on *Darkness Descends*, it's him and me all over the damn thing and the same with *Leave Scars*. It's not that the other guys didn't contribute, it's just their vision might have been a little bit different than what I wanted **DARK ANGEL** to be."

Sliding all rumors and gossip aside, what was the real reason for Jim's departure from the ungodly ones? "It was a combination of things that weren't going the way that they were supposed to, and years and years of bullshit lineup changes. I don't care if you print this, but **DARK ANGEL** died for me when Don and Robbie left the band. Being in the band with Gene was the only thing that kept me there, otherwise I could give a shit. Nothing bad to say about the other guys, but when you're in a band with guys all of your life and then one by one they're dropping out and leaving, you're like 'why am I doing this, I'm not making any money'. After *Darkness Descends*, it started heading that way for me and I was losing interest, I mean, how are you going to top that? *Leave Scars* was a hell of an album and Ron did a great job, he's a machine. But it just wasn't the same. Dude, you would trip out if you knew where everyone is now. I know that Gene has the STRAPPING thing happening (among other things) and I talk to him once or twice a year. Robbie Yahn is in the Army in Czechoslovakia and he's like my brother. He calls me once a year around Christmas. Don Doty is, like, a car salesman. Eric works at the Guitar Center here in L.A. and I don't hang with him too much. He called me about a year ago when he was trying to get **DARK ANGEL** reformed and I called Gene and said, 'what do you think?' The whole idea was to get the *Darkness Descends* lineup and that was the only way I was interested. If it's not the original lineup then you're cheating the fans. Something happened where they couldn't get Don and it didn't pan out. Everybody just kind of has their own thing going now and I'm so busy with my new band that I couldn't be happier."

After being M.I.A. for the last twelve years, why did Jim decide to resurface with **DREAMS OF DAMNATION**? "Well, I have just been sitting around writing these riffs and some of the stuff on the new CD is, like, seven or eight years old. Then, after the rumor of the **DARK ANGEL** reunion, I started running into friends and meeting people. Well, the more people I met, the more people I got contacted by. We went out to this WITCHERY and EMPEROR gig in L.A. and Jenson is walking me around and introducing me to everyone and they all treated me like a king. Everyone was like 'dude, when are you going to play? Where have you been?,' ya know? So I started thinking, 'man, I gotta get my act together because there are a lot of people out there who still care.' So I put this band together with Charlie Sylvia (vocals / bass) whom I have known for twenty years. I said, 'dude lets do the classic power trio thing like DESTRUCTION or SODOM,' and we hooked up with a drummer by the name of Al Mendez. The name of the new CD is *Let The Violence Begin* and you're going to hear the **DARK ANGEL** sound because that's the way I write songs, its just my style. We were conscious of that and of course the comparisons are there, but it's a whole different animal. We are all fans of old school and we wanted to write an album that we could sit down, drink beer and listen to. If you liked **DARK ANGEL** I think your going to like **DREAMS OF DAMNATION.**"

Anyone out there that wants to talk about **DARK ANGEL**, **DREAMS OF DAMNATION**, thrash metal in general or even Martial Arts (Jim's other love), is welcome to email him at Japromo1@aol.com.

Micha Kite



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HOUWITSER

Howitzer-a short cannon used to fire projectiles at medium muzzle velocities and with relatively high trajectories. HOUWITSER-a Dutch death metal band capable of firing high velocity brutality with extremely devastating trajectory. HOUWITSER (the Dutch spelling by the way, as they are from The Netherlands) started in 1997 by Aad [drums-SINISTER, THANATOS] and guitarist Michel [ex-SINISTER]. They completed the line-up with Theo, [JUDGEMENT DAY, THANATOS] on bass guitar and ex-SINSITER vocalist Mike. After recording a demo mainly meant for interested labels they were signed to Displeased records in 1998. In November of that year they recorded their first full length, *Death...But Not Buried,* which was released in the spring of 1999. By the end of 1999, they decided to replace singer Mike by Arjaan "Djortzzz". In March of this year they went into the studio to record *Embrace Damnation*, which, according to Theo-whom this interview was conducted with, should be available in the states by the time you read this. Prepare for the merciless onslaught of this Dutch death metal weapon, and get ready to "Embrace Damnation."

Pit: Most of the members of* HOUWITSER *are in other bands, (SINISTER, JUDGEMENT DAY, THANATOS). How are you able to come up with material for* HOUWITSER *and know it is right for* HOUWITSER*, and not right for the other bands you are involved with? How do you guys keep all your musical ideas separate and not get them mixed up with your other bands? How do you keep a separate identity?

Theo van Eekelen: Well, each band has their own way of song writing. In THANATOS, Stephan writes the songs and lyrics. He has a different manner of songwriting than we in **HOUWITSER** have. With **HOUWITSER**, it is mainly Aad, Michel and me who write the songs. Each band has different members like Stephan from THANATOS is not in **HOUWITSER** or SINISTER, I am not in SINISTER. We all have our own way of writing, which gives each band their own identity.

Who in* HOUWITSER *is the primary songwriter and how do you compose your music?

Like I said before...it's mainly Aad, Michel and me who are writing the songs .We just enter the rehearsal room, one of us comes up with some riffs or Aad with a cool drum part and we make a song of it...simple!

HOUWITSER *play traditional heavy, sick and twisted death metal, mostly in The American style. What is it about this type of music that makes you want to play it and what are your influences?*

I have been into the metal music for about 17 years now. It all started with bands like AC/DC, IRON MAIDEN, BLACK SABBATH, and JUDAS PRIEST. Later I discovered the brutal bands: POSSESSED, HELLHAMMER/CELTIC FROST, SACRIFICE, INFERNAL MAJESTY, DEATHROW, and NASTY SAVAGE. Then the early 90's Death metal: ENTOMBED, GRAVE, DISMEMBER. What I listen to the most right now is American Death metal: BRODEQUIN, DISGORGE, DEEDS OF FLESH, VILE, MALIGNANCY, SKINLESS, PROPHECY, GORGASM, DISINTER, ETERNAL SUFFERING, and AURORA BOREALIS. All these bands make me play sick and twisted death metal and are also my influences!

HOUWITSER *lyrics are especially brutal. Who writes them, and where do the ideas come from? What is the significance of the samples you use on* Embrace Damnation?

Our singer, Djortzzz, writes them. He gets his ideas from the newspaper, news on television, horror movies or just from what we have gone through. The samples are very brutal and they fit perfect with our music, so why not use them?

Will you be touring in support of* Embrace Damnation? *Do you hope that* HOUWITSER *can invade the States sometime in the future?

There were plans to tour Europe in September with NILE, INCANTATION, HATE ETERNAL, and IMPALED. More than 20 shows were booked but the whole tour was canceled. Don't ask me why, I still don't know! We hope to tour later this year. It would be fucking great to come over to the States. I love it there. I was in the States in 1999 with SINISTER and it was great. There is a chance we will come over there next year but nothing is sure yet!

HOUWITSER *is on Displeased records, how is this collaboration and are you happy with them?*

The collaboration is good. Yeah, we are satisfied with them.

What do you hope will happen for* HOUWITSER *in the future?

I hope that we become millionaires and I want to go on tour soon! Sex, drugs and death metal! The true supporters of ultra-brutal death metal must check out *Embrace Damnation.* A masterpiece of merciless death metal onslaught!

AnneMarie Bowman

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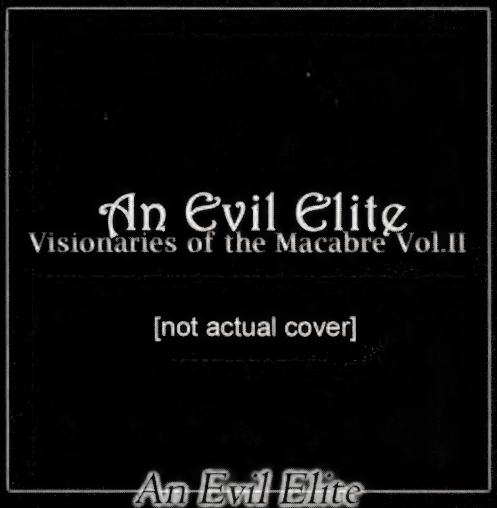

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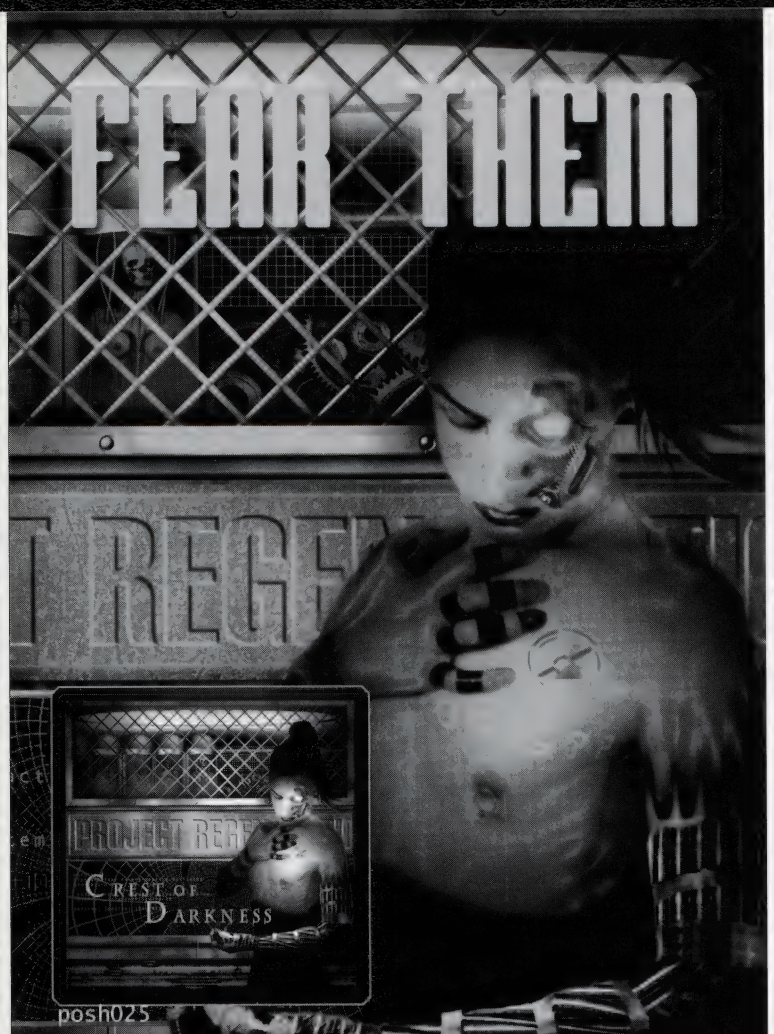

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LAMB OF GOD started as BURN THE PRIEST in 1994. After numerous line up changes, this band has changed their name and are currently signed to Prosthetic Records. A strange mix of grind and TODAY IS THE DAY, this might help propel this band to something other than your average grindcore band.

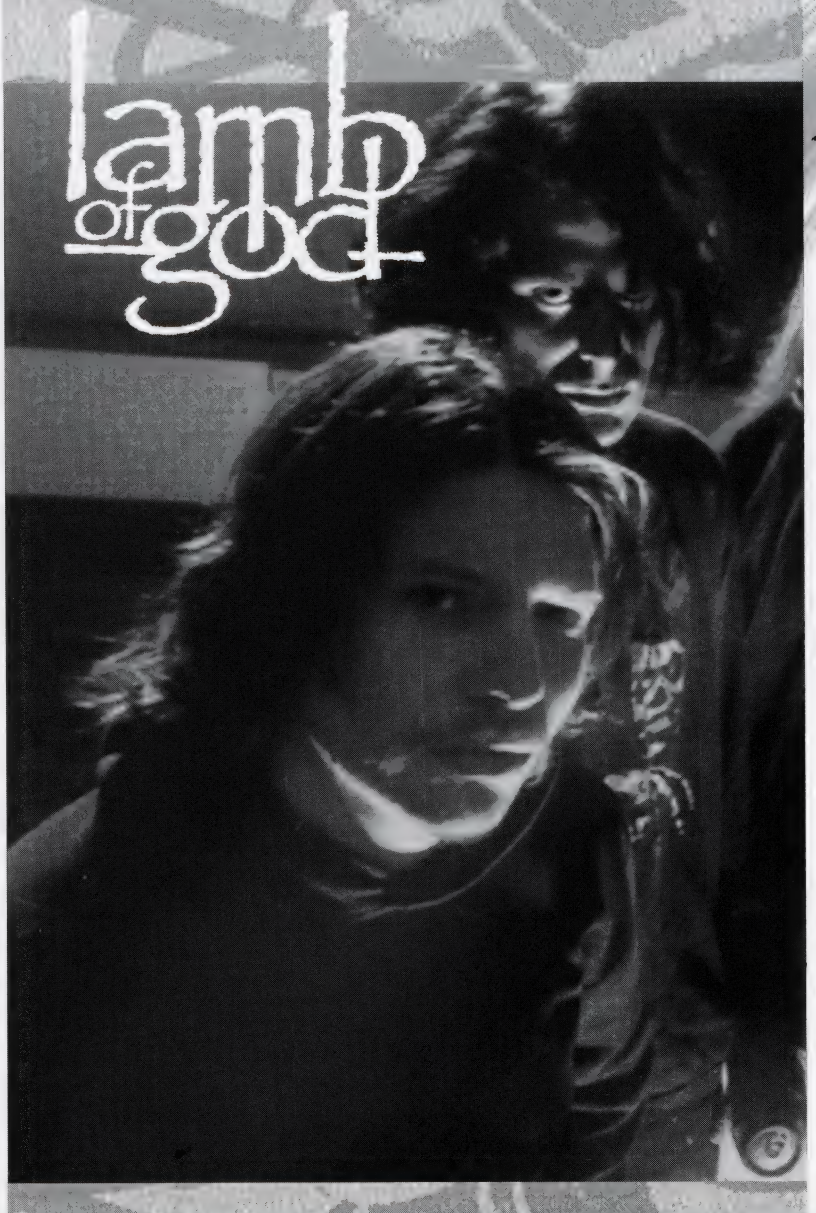
Pit: You have changed your band name. Is there any religious connotations behind this change?

Chris Adler: We create music, individually and collectively enabling our influences to manifest themselves, and create something unique and priceless. There is something deeply personal and spiritual behind our creation, but not in the sense you are asking. We are a band, not a religious organization. We are musicians, not preachers. Simply put, no. To us the new name captures the essence of its predecessor and emphasizes it even more so.

Your new album was produced by Steve Austin, (of TODAY IS THE DAY) What made you decide to use him in particular? Were you striving for a specific sound with him, or did you want to find someone who really has not been overused as a producer?

We went with Steve on our first record and it seemed like a natural choice to return, but there was more to it. Together, Steve and I produced the first record, and the relationship that was built with him both personally and professionally, is irreplaceable. We have a common understanding and respect of each other that is hard to find. Steve is a fan of the band and knows what we are capable of. He knows we won't settle and he busts his ass to make sure we don't have to. He is a true professional who has proven to us that he will go the extra mile. There are very few people in this business that are trustworthy and pure. Steve Austin is one of them. He is, at the very least, an honorary member of this band.

There wasn't a specific sound that we had in mind when we entered the studio. We knew what we sounded like and wanted to do our best to capture it. A metal band with the mic's on. There weren't any 3-day vocal harmony warm-ups or 40 guitar tracks. It's us doing what we do. No bullshit. We didn't want it and did-



n't have time for it. What we came out with was exactly what we went in with, an amazing record. Steve helped us make sure of it.

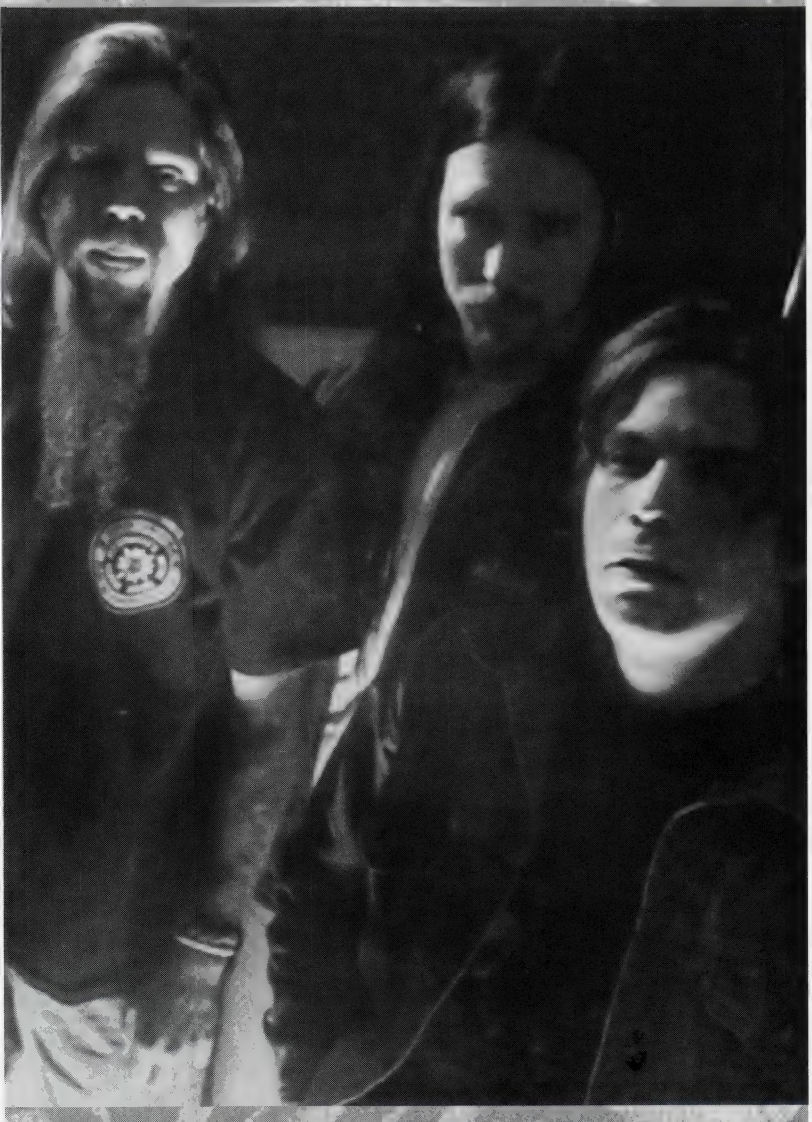
Do you feel this CD is represents your bands sound currently?

The new CD represents the band very well right now. It's hard to say how definitive it is because we will always continue to move forward. The same way this album is a vast progression from our last, I'm sure the next one will follow suit. We are constantly morphing as our individual influences surface and merge. There is also a constant evolution of goals as a group and individually. As we move through new experiences and grow as musicians, we constantly set our sights higher. The new CD is even more than we expected as we headed out of the last one. We are very happy with it and at the same time excited about moving forward.

Nowadays it seems there a lot of bands cluttering up the scene. What do you think will set you apart from all the other bands who sound similar?

We set ourselves apart by what we do and how we get it done. Like I mentioned earlier, we are playing the music that we want to hear. We aren't recycling riffs or ripping off whoever is popular at the moment. Our music is genuine. We aren't stuck in one direction and afraid to try something else. We don't fit into any one metal "category" because we incorporate elements from many types of extreme music in creating our sound. Our individual influences vary so greatly that when we get together as a group things are always combining and exploding in interesting ways. It's not like we are 5 black metal or 5 power metal guys trying to improve something that has already been done. It's important to us to know that we are doing something unique and creative. We would be defeating ourselves to end up sounding exactly like someone else. We believe in the purpose that we set out for ourselves. That alone sets us apart. Add to that our live show, our strength and determination, our perseverance and our bond as a group, and you have a band that sets itself apart. We take what we are doing seriously and believe we have created something very distinctive.

Elaine Rawlings
www.lamb-of-god.com



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AMEN

Armed with a new album, *We Have Come For Your Parents*, the follow up to last years self titled debut, AMEN have returned! After coming out of an ill-fated deal with Roadrunner Records, the band has a new label (Virgin) and are more pissed off than ever before! This new album will change all preconceptions about this band. Blistering, angry music which defies categorization, AMEN have set out to change the face of heavy music. Sounding nothing like any of their counterparts, some of whom also took part with them on this year's Tattoo The Earth tour, AMEN were one of the best bands playing, with a few exceptions. Their roots are firmly set in the underground and no one can question their integrity as far as music goes. So pick up the new album, if you haven't already, and prepare to be blown away!

Photo: Frank White

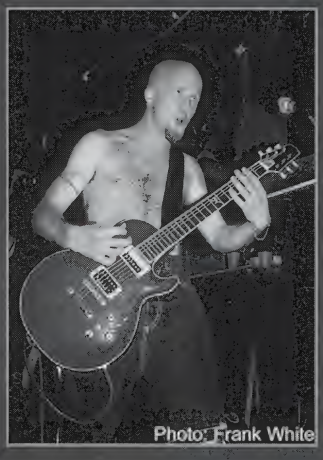
Photo: Frank White

Photo: Jeff Wolfe

***Pit: Tell us about the recording of the new album,* We Have Come For Your Parents.**

Casey Chaos: We did about twenty songs in thirty days. Ross Robinson produced it, Mike Fraser engineered and mixed it. We spent about two weeks mixing it.

Have you spent the whole time since you're last US tour writing?

Casey: Yes. We were supposed to go to Europe, but that didn't happen, so, I wrote like fifty-five songs in three months and we went in the following month and recorded. I made two tapes of new stuff for Ross (Robinson) and the band and let them decide which songs to record. We nailed it down to twenty-five songs and we tracked twenty of them.

> "We would like to thank them for fucking up for us."

Sonny Mayo: Larkin (drums) did twenty songs in less than four days. The first day [of recording] is supposed to be a throwaway day and we had three songs done.

Did you spend any time in pre-production?

Casey: We did about one week with Ross in the rehearsal room

Sonny: Narrowing songs down.

Casey: Figuring out what songs really felt good.

So how did the deal with Virgin Records come about?

Casey: Well, Roadrunner is the worst label in the eternity of music.

Sonny: We would like to thank them for fucking up for us.

Casey: We are not bitter in any way because we are living a completely different lifestyle now. We are not suffering or being miserable or completely ripped off. The thing is that Roadrunner has a lot of amazing people that work for them, unfortunately they don't run the company. All the people we worked with there are incredible and we're totally grateful. We did our deal with Virgin through Ross. Virgin was interested in us before we signed with Roadrunner, so it was only natural to go with them. I would warn any band, considering your magazine, never to go with Roadrunner Records because you'll be ripped off. Don't sell your publishing, don't sell your merchandise and hold out for a better deal. We were very fortunate in every way, shape, and form. The deal we signed with Roadrunner wasn't like a stereotypical deal, where most bands get a $30,000 record deal or whatever. It was a legitimate deal. We got a label that believes in us now. People keep asking me, 'What are you doing with Virgin?' The thing is , Virgin started off as an independent label and they've always believed in music. It just so happens in the nineties, a lot of the bands they got were huge, LENNY KRAVITZ, SMASHING PUMKINS. Now that they have all these superstars, they sent us on a tour in Europe to meet all the heads of the label. They heard tour album and they told us that it reminded them of why they started the label. It seemed like everyone could relate to it on some level.

So who does most of the writing for you?

Casey: I write all the words and music. I get together with Larkin and just write all the shit. I do alot of demos at my house and then go through them.

Does everybody just add in their ideas afterward?

Casey: Whatever ideas everybody else has, we just go through them to see if it is better or worse for the song. It just happens that I've got to write, so I'm constantly demoing shit.

Sonny: Then we hear it and go "amazing, I want to play that!"

Casey: That's the way it has worked out so far.

Sonny: I'm the guy that makes sure everyone else knows their parts. Casey makes sure I know it, and I go to every one to make sure they know it.

Is there anyone in the band who says, you can't use that riff because it sounds too much like everyone else?

Casey: I don't think so. It's all about honesty and truth. Either you feel it or you don't.

Sonny: The closest it comes to that is maybe we'll say that part sounds a little too molten or it doesn't sound like we're really delivering.

Casey: Our intent isn't to be like, you know, I love black metal and I love aggressive music and everything, but I don't want to be like in this metal category or any category so to speak. I kinda want to be off on my own little island somewhere. Kind of like the way I feel in society. All the bands that I truly like, THE SWANS and even a lot of the black metal bands, I think, musically they are not really black metal, they are more symphonic.

Since you're pretty different from most of the new bands coming out what are you're feelings about the scene now?

Casey: Well, a lot of the American population doesn't know what honesty is. They just believe what they see in magazines and on television. This is what's happening now , so you've got to sound like this. I think it is important to do something honest because we live in a dishonest world. It's great to be influenced by other bands, I just don't see why you would want to be that band. It's like musical chameleons, they are on these like, musical chairs where they jump from seat to seat, just so they can fucking be rich and famous.

Would you ever consider touring with a black or death metal band?

Casey: A lot of people ask me this because I'm such a big black metal fan. If we ever got big enough to where we got a draw of, whatever the draw would be. I would bring out a black metal band, I wouldn't like to have the same type of bands, it becomes redundant.

Elaine Rawlings

Virgin

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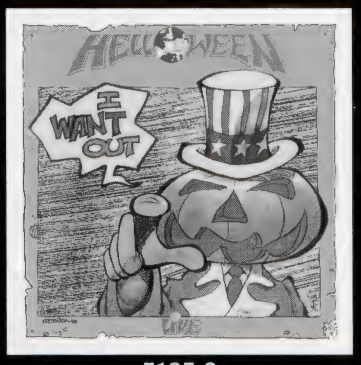

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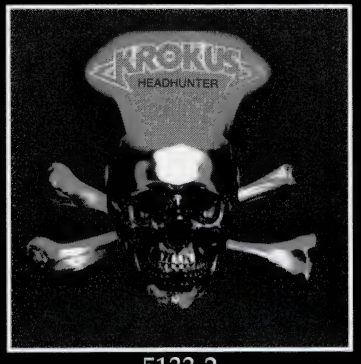

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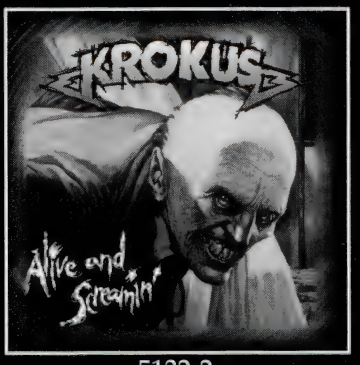

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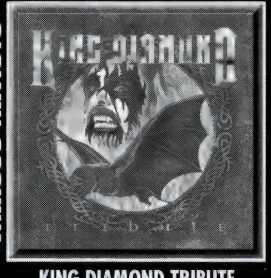

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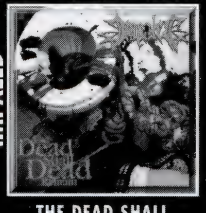

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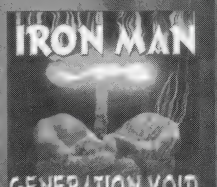

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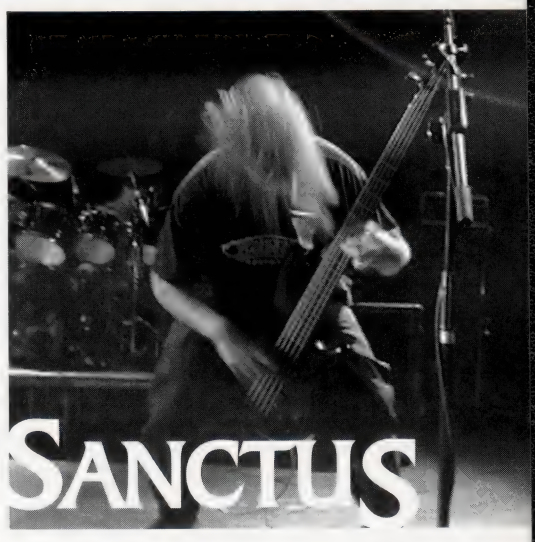
The extraordinary thing about SANCTUS (formerly PANTHEON) is in the convincing way this group of sun-drenched Los Angeles metal heads (singer Jason McCrarey, guitarists Mike O'Meara and Royce Hsu, bassist Brent Gibson, keyboardist Adrian Ross, and drummer Michael Chi) have been able to create a sophisticated, European sound (combining elements of both black and death metal, but with other influences as well), that reviewers have to check the album credits to remind themselves of where the boys hail from.

***Aeon Sky* is SANCTUS' Metal Blade Records debut. But one listen to the mix of musical textures (beautiful keyboards and raging guitars) and divergent vocal styles (including a guest appearance by classically-trained Sarah Watson), and one look at the thoughtful, poetic lyrics, and you'll swear that this is a seasoned, not first effort. To be sure, the members of SANCTUS are serious musicians and serious students (almost all have or are working on college degrees). The sound of *Aeon Sky* is influenced by all of the various styles that each band member favors, from pensive, brooding moments, to full-on brutal, blasting guitar and drum attacks, back to quieter, eerie moods. The listener is always kept guessing what's next.**

Inked to Metal Blade in 1998 (and proof that a band can still get signed by simply sending their demo to a label) the guys spent a lot of time and care on *Aeon Sky* with producer Dave Casey. Now ready to hit the road, including a spot at this year's Los Angeles Metal-Fest, bassist Brent Gibson took a break from working on his psychology degree, selling organic viagra, and hanging out on the sets of porno flicks, to elaborate on the unfolding SANCTUS story.



Pit: The first thing that struck me about your CD are all the different sounds. Are you all into various styles?

Brent Gibson: We have a vast array of music on this album. There's something for everybody, you know? We are all kind of into different things. Mike (O'Meara) and Jason are really into black metal. We're all really into DREAM THEATRE. The keyboards play a big part.

What about your personal influences?

I'm into a lot of different stuff, a lot of jazz, and I play everything on bass. But when it comes to **SANCTUS**, it's black metal with some heavy parts, some brutal parts, and some melodic parts. Personally, I'm way into brutal, brutal stuff like SUFFOCATION, GORGASM, CRYPTOPSY and shit. I love the fast stuff.

Do you see SANCTUS moving in a more aggressive musical direction in the future?

We're not the most brutal band on the planet, but I think that the next album will be more brutal. We've been getting some favorable reviews, though. A lot of comparisons to bands from Norway and Europe. It's pretty cool to be compared to CRADLE OF FILTH on your first album!

Besides the sound, I'm impressed by the intelligent lyrics.

Jason is the man when it comes to English. His lyrics are like poetry. He has a bachelor's degree in English and he's working on his master's degree right now at Cal State Long Beach.

Describe your recent release-party show (At L.A.'s Ventura Theatre.).

The show was insane, dude. It was really fuckin' cool, and just what we needed. We had a lot of people there. Everyone was really cool. Fans were yelling out "**SANCTUS**, **SANCTUS**," and we signed autographs. We really gave it our all. I was sore, like, two days after that show because I played so hard and head-banged so much!

Were you happy with the sound?

Royce just got a new processor for his guitar, so it sounded really good. Mike O'Meara, his stuff always sounds good. It went off really well.

OK, how did you guys get on Metal Blade?

Basically, they heard our demo and offered us a contract. In 1998, Joey Severance, who worked there, heard the PANTHEON demo and gave it to (label head) Brian Slagel, and Slagel dug it!

So you're working at Metal Blade had nothing to do with it?

I did work there for a year, but no it didn't. It's cool the way it worked out, though, because I know all the guys there really well. So I can check in with them anytime and know what's going on.

Jon "K" Konjoyan
www.**SANCTUS**.cjb.net

RAVEN

Photo: Yuki Kuroyangi

RAVEN is back in circulation with a new album entitled *One For All*. What's more, it is a domestic release, as Metal Blade is the new home for RAVEN in United States.

Pit: There's no need to question RAVEN's status in the world of heavy metal. The band helped invent the style as it emerged as one of the N.W.O.B.H.M. groups. RAVEN experienced many high points in their career, but they also went through some rough times as well.

Bassist-vocalist, John Gallagher, talks about the new album, and other RAVEN related topics and releases. The title of the new album is One For All which is a reverse to All For One, is this some sort of sequel?

John Gallagher: I just threw that title as a joke, and everyone thought it was pretty cool. The new album has a great unified feel like that album (*All For One*) did. Musically they're very different albums. I mean, we reunited with producer Michael Wagener, but it wasn't meant to be a sequel or anything like that. It's just another **RAVEN** album. We had all the songs written before we even thought of using Wagener, so there wasn't anything planned, things just sort of developed. The arrangements stayed as they were when we originally wrote the songs. Accident or not, but we're really happy with how this album turned out.

Photo: Frank White

Since Nothing Exceeds Like Excess back in 1989 RAVEN completely disappeared from the American market, but the band wasn't dead at all, tell us what happened?

When the era of grunge came to America we just couldn't get arrested with our music. We just concentrated on Europe and Japan. We figured that we were in the business for long enough to handle any ups and downs. We just wanted to do what we do best. In 1990 we did an album called *Architect Of Fear* which is a great, heavy album. We followed that with an EP and we toured Europe. Also, at that time my house burned down, and I had a lot of guitars stolen, it was not a happy time for me nor the band. We came back in 1994, and we did Foundations Forum. We did really good there, and we got record deals from Europe and Japan. We did an album called *Glow*, which did very good over there. On the strength of that, we went to Japan where we did a live album, *Destroy All Monsters*. *Glow* was a really strong album, and very diverse. We did a THIN LIZZY cover on it, and we even had a ballad on it. With such great response we completed the *Everything Louder* album, and we toured with TANK and HAMMERFALL.

"THERE ARE LOTS OF GREAT PLAYERS OUT THERE, BUT YOU DON'T WANT TO BE LOCKED ON THE BUS WITH SOMEONE WHO IS A REAL ASSHOLE".

The album we did last year was called *Raw Tracks*, and it was a collection of unreleased songs, and other rare stuff. This finally brings us to the current album *One For All* which was just released, so here we are.

With Metal Blade in the picture now, what perspectives are there for a RAVEN tour?

Touring in the United States is very expensive. We did some dates with UDO in the States, but they were limited. At the moment we see ourselves doing an occasional one or two offs. We also have some personal problems with time. We have families, and we have to work around that. It's not easy for us at this stage, but we really want to get out and play for the people who want to see us. It's still very hard for metal. In some places people wouldn't come to see Jesus come off the cross on Wednesday night.

Also for the last 13 years you've been playing with drummer Joe Hasselvander who is also a member of PENTAGRAM.

We've known Joe since about 1985, he was always around. When Rob (Hunter) left, which of course was a total surprise because one day he just wasn't there anymore. He told our manager, but didn't tell us. We auditioned several people which was disastrous; no common ground whatsoever. I don't know who thought of it, but we decided to try out Joe. The hardest thing is to find somebody you can get on with. There are lots of great players out there, but you don't want to be locked on the bus with someone who is a real asshole. Luckily we never had that, other than maybe some of the crew. Joe just fits like a dream, and of course he also plays guitar, writes songs. Rob did too. Joe is someone we needed to have in our band. He's been with us for 13 years now, and Rob was only with us for seven.

Are you in contact with Rob at all?

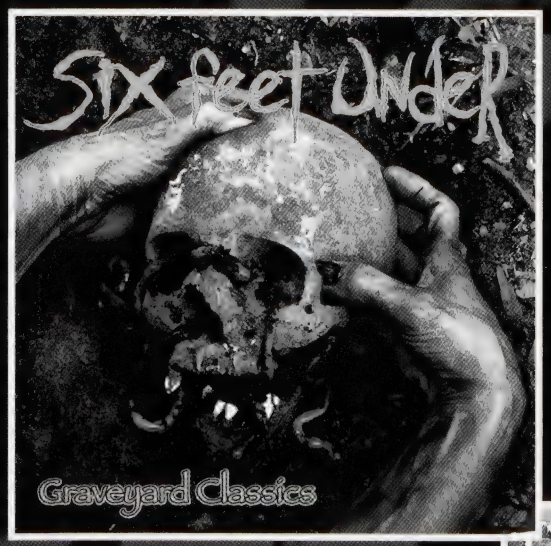
I've never seen him since. We've talked few times. He's doing production now, he deals with live sound, and I think he has a band on the side. He's happy, he does what he wanted to do.

So, what's the best thing about being in RAVEN?

Getting up on stage, and jumping around for 90 minutes. Just let me show you... (he plugs in his guitar and gives yours truly The Royal **RAVEN** Treatment over the phone), I hope you got that down!

Mark Kadzielawa

NEW FROM METAL BLADE



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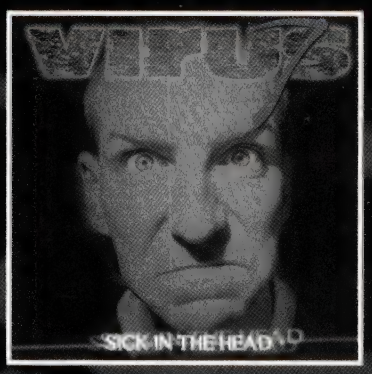

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Pit: I thought* DEFLESHED *was going to do the CANNIBAL CORPSE tour in August here in the States, what happened?

Gustaf Jorde: We had different plans for August, so it did not suit us to go to the States. We had to cancel. It was a shame because touring with CANNIBAL CORPSE would have been a great opportunity for us. We will get there though.

So you are hoping to tour the States sometime?

Yes. A problem I have though is three or four weeks in a row is too long for me. I could come for a long week, week and a half, but I work. I cannot get that much time off. See, CANNIBAL CORPSE are professional musicians and can live off the band. We have to work, and do it in our spare time. We have to work, so we do not have unlimited time to tour, even if we wanted to. At the end of the day, we do not get much money from doing what we do with the band. Money is not the reason we do it either, but to go somewhere and do a job for four weeks and not be paid, well we cannot do that. It has nothing to do with the passion for playing, we have that, but we have to be reasonable, we have bills to pay and have to work to stay alive.

Do you hope that some day you will be able to live off the band and be able to tour more?

No, that was never the reason we started this band. We are in it because we like to play this kind of music, its music we like to listen to, and we like being around each other. Therefore, when we have a chance to go somewhere to play, it is like a bonus. We do not have those kinds of goals, to live off the band. We do it for fun, in our spare time. When you do something professionally, it takes away the spirit of doing it. We like to do it; we like going to the rehearsal room. If it became like work for us, it would be, like, no fun. It would be routine, and if it becomes like that, I do not think we would develop as a band.

Fast Forward ***is an unrelenting powerhouse of pure speed and aggression. Where does the aggression come from?***

Well, I don't know. I think it comes from liking what we do. We have no pressure; we do what we want, when we want it. I think that if we were to do this full time it would not turn out so good.

Could the aggression come from blowing off steam from your everyday life?

I don't think so. It would probably be cool to say something like that, but our daytime lives are not causing us to have inner aggression. For us it is simply the way to play music. It's killer when it's fast, it's like a drug, to play fast. For me it is almost essential for music to be fast. We need it, that is why we play it!

If it does not come from you blowing off steam, then does it just come from your influences and what you grew up listening to?

Yeah! I think we take music back to the roots of thrash metal, but in my eyes, we updated it. None of the bands in the 80's played grind metal the way we do. I think we updated it, and that is the concept we developed. I think that is why people can tell it is **DEFLESHED** when they hear one of our songs. As for influences we listen to all kinds of metal from old IRON MAIDEN to CARCASS, everything. Then you get all these elements mixing in the music. One time, when we first started the band, we tried to be simply, death metal.

You know you are answering my next two questions before I even asked them! I was going to ask you about your early death metal sound, the change, so go on.

In the first year or so, we played death metal. Back then it was so important to stay true death metal. You couldn't take thrash metal or heavy metal riffs and mix them in, because it was that kind of era. It was almost forbidden. We were young as a band and could not develop. I think it was more or less with *Under The Blade* that we decided to make an album and do it exactly the way we wanted it. Make music that felt good to play. That was actually the first album that people reacted on. I think that since we had so much in the music that was not there before, it got peoples attention. We wanted to get into the music more, do things that other bands have not done, and always go a step further each time. That is what we did with *Fast Forward*.

Fast Forward ***is reminiscent of a retro style, kind of like DESTRUCTION or KREATOR, but definitely updated. It does not sound like a copy at all.***

We do not try to do what they did, that would be ridiculous. None of the bands that try to do what they did succeed because I would still rather listen to old DESTRUCTION. As for the early days it was so important to even keep my voice as low as possible. With the newer albums I do a variation with my vocals. Everything from screams to deep growling. I think it is good when you try to erase the laws within metal. It's allowed, now, to experiment, and take influences from all kinds of music. The only law we have for ourselves, and the music we do, is that it must contain a lot of energy and aggression.

I was wondering what it was about Sweden and how it has become a powerhouse on the world scene of metal. Band after band, in all genre's of extreme music, be it death metal, black metal, thrashing grind metal, doom and atmospheric metal, are coming from Sweden and really making a mark. Most of them are high quality bands and very good at what they do. What is going on up there?

In Sweden, it is simple to get hold of an instrument, and get involved in a band. The government supports this kind of activity. They think it is great that kids get involved playing music instead of say harassing older people. They have financed rehearsal places and equipped them with instruments. Most kids in Sweden have picked up one instrument or another at one time. Mostly it starts with a bunch of friends going to one of these rehearsal rooms just to get together and have fun. After a while they get better and better, and get serious at what they do.

AnneMarie Bowman

http://home.swipnet.se/defleshed/

PAVEMENT MUSIC

A PERFECT CIRCLE is the alter-ego of many of its members, (Billy Howerdel, Maynard James Keenan, Troy Van Leeuwen, Paz Lenchantin, and Josh Freese). Somehow this 'side-project' has taken front and center, both for the members and for the fans. *Mer de Noms*, the band's debut, topped the charts almost immediately. Then, they set out to tour, and no small tour either, opening for NINE INCH NAILS. On the last date with NIN, Troy Van Leeuwen took some time to talk about his view of what makes A PERFECT CIRCLE.

Pit: I've read a lot of the press releases lately, and they all have a lot to do with Billy and Maynard, so it's cool that you're here. What's your take? How you became involved, what* A PERFECT CIRCLE *is, from your perspective.

Troy Van Leeuwen: A little history: my last band, FAILURE, toured with TOOL a few times. That's how I met Maynard and Billy, Billy was working for Adam, TOOL's guitar player. Later on, we did Lollapalooza 97, with TOOL, and DEVO was playing, and that's where I met Josh. I had heard about this project from other people. Actually, Kelly, the drummer for FAILURE, played with them a couple times. It was almost like a fateful thing when I heard Billy's voice on the answering machine one day, saying they were looking for a guitar player. So, I went down, and it was very chill. The music was good, and everyone that was playing were really pro players. It was just instant vibe.

So, do you see this as more of a side-project for you, or as something that will be a lasting thing?

Well, obviously, I think we're going to take this as far as it can go. But, everyone has something else going on. Of course, Maynard has TOOL, and I have another band, called ENEMY. Maybe when we take another break, I see us getting together again, somewhere down the road. That's the way I'm seeing it, because everything just took off when it started.

Did you expect it to go even where it is right now?

Well, I did at some point. I did think that it was going to get big. I didn't expect it to happen right out of the box, the way it is, number 4 on the charts, that blew my mind! And it was nice to see that! I see that this band, project, whatever you want to call it, has some validity as far as intelligence and emotion. I was glad to see that we were above NSYNC in the charts.

***Tell us a little about your band,* ENEMY.**

After FAILURE disbanded, I immersed myself into writing and decided I wanted to find a band. And, as it is right now, it's just a power-trio. We might add a lead guitar player, not sure yet, but now that I'm doing this, ENEMY has taken a bit of a back-seat just for a little while. The bass player is from HANDSOME. It's kind of like hardcore meets West coast, not so hardcore. We admire each other a lot, so that's cool.

Where else have you toured? Is this just the American leg or are you going to Europe?

Yeah, actually, we go to London soon. This is the last night with NINE INCH NAILS.

***How has your reception been supporting* NIN?**

We've had a really good reception. Really, really responsive crowds. It seems like they're hungry for it!

Do you like touring or recording better?

I can't really see doing one without the other. They go hand-in-hand. Of course, having a tour like this and having the record do well is fun. I've been on the other side of the fence where you're out there on tour, in a van, and you're hating life because people don't know that your record's in the store. So, obviously, it's nicer having the label behind you.

Anything stand out on this tour with* NIN—*any funny stories?

Nothing really outlandish—maybe some stuff offstage. For Trent's [Reznor] birthday, we dressed up as Hooters girls. Of course, I had some apples for my hooters, and everyone had make-up on and a wig on, and when he came out, to go onstage, which is a very secure area, we were all there, yelling like, "give me a VIP pass!" We were the ugliest Hooters girls! [laughs] We all went bowling the other night...it's been fun.

Are you running out of steam at all?

That's interesting that you ask that. I think it's the perfect time for us to go to Europe because we're not really running out of steam, but it's time for a change of scenery.

What other hobbies do you have, outside of music?

Really, all that I do revolves around music, working on records, producing.

Do you see music going more towards computer-based?

I think it's hard to fight it. I know I fought it for a long time. But the convenience is [hard to deny]. I actually don't think it's been explored enough. The creative aspect of using computers for music can be completely mind-boggling. I still think you need to balance it out with musicians. Of course, I could do a whole remix without needing any musicians, but that takes all the fun out of it.

Errin Klein

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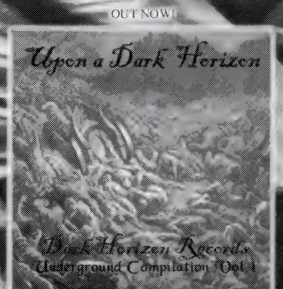

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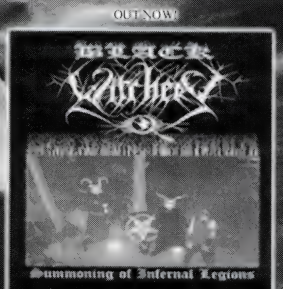

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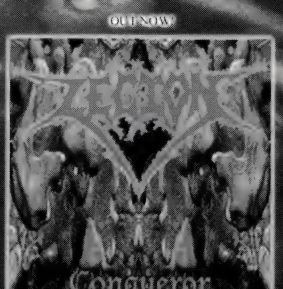

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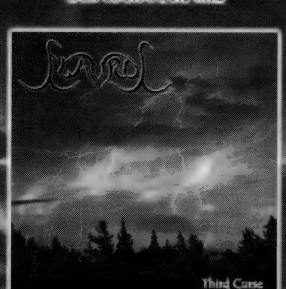

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The South is on the rise again! Swamp walloping guitars driven by declamatory bass and sour mash driven drums, is the gist for acts like DOWN, FU MANCHU, PANTERA and *BLACK LABEL SOCIETY*. Straight out of the OZZY camp, Zakk Wylde is one beer guzzling, hell raising guitarist who, after a four solo album career, has shown that he can more than handle his own on the stage as well as at the bar. One spin of his new disk, *Stronger Than Death* (the evil twin of last years *Sonic Brew*), and you'll be swept down into the menacing sludge of gator-land proving that he isn't just some 80's icon who has fallen into the mud.

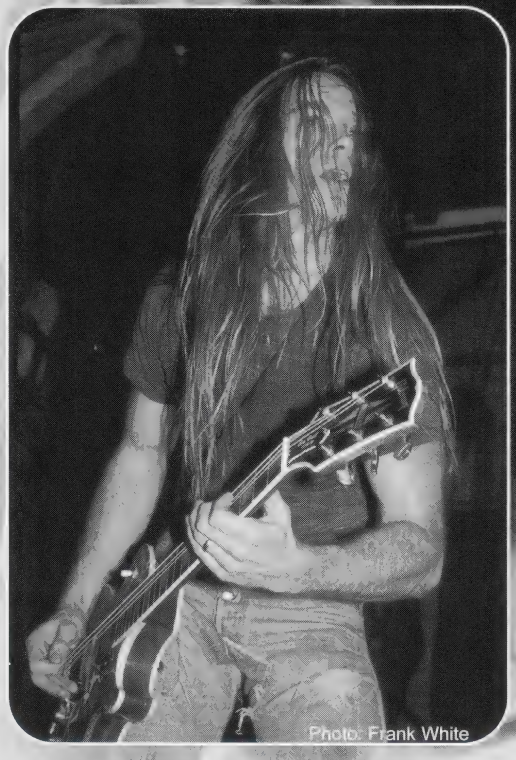

Photo: Frank White

BLACK LABEL SOCIETY

STRONGER THAN DEATH

***Pit: Every album you've done seems like a complete 180 from the previous effort until now.* Stronger Than Death *sounds like the bookend to last years* Sonic Brew.**

Zakk Wylde: Well the difference is the last one kicked some ass and this one kicks some motherfuckin' ass (chuckles). The last album came out about a year and a half-ago, but in the States it's only been out about a year, so it's a little bit older for us.

Was any of the material conceived during the writing of* Sonic Brew *or did you just kind of go back into the studio with the same vibe?

Naw, its all-new stuff. It's the same vibe except we did the last one in thirty-six days and we did this one in sixty. We had a little bit more time to dial everything in, like the drum sound. Fidelity wise, I think its bigger sounding than *Sonic Brew*, which I'm proud, of but on this one we just had more time. I produced the whole thing this time around as opposed to co-producing the last one.

The beginning riff in "All For You" sounds similar to the riff in "The Beginning...At Last". Was this intentional? I noticed that there is a slight tinge of OZZY's vocals in your voice during "All for You".

No, it's just another riff, ya know. I guess it's in the same **BLACK LABEL** vein. I tried to do something different with my voice because I did those vocals later on during the recording. After I double tracked the vocals I was, like, "holy shit dude, it sounds like fucking OZZY." I used to sing OZZY songs at the sound checks and in cover bands. At the end of the song it comes back in with my natural voice. I guess that song is my ode to OZZY.

I noticed, with ballads like "Rust," it's still heavy, but before, on other releases, you had kind of the southern rock, bleeding-heart type of ballads. I take it now life is good (ha, ha, ha...)?

I don't get depressed about things; I just get pissed off, man. Depression is fucking lame. Everybody has bad days but you gotta do something about it instead of being a candy-ass. I'll leave that up to Billy Corgen and Eddie Vedder.

So you're becoming a full-fledged movie star now, huh (ha, ha, ha...)?

I've been doing this *Metal Gods* movie with Mark Wahlberg and Jennifer Aniston. I'm so busy doing that, and that's not going to rap up until the end of June. I play this beer guzzling guitar player...it's a far stretch (laughter). It's not about Ripper Owens as some rumors have it. It's just a Cinderella story, like with me loving SABBATH and OZZY and I end up in the band, ya know. That's just the vehicle for the movie. It's really about Mark and Jennifer with all this other shit going on around it. This is a full-blown major motion picture with a sixty thousand-dollar budget and everything.

I hear you may be brewing your own beer soon?

At the end of the day it's all about the eighty pack anyway. I have brewed a few batches here at the house and the stuff is coming out all right. Who knows, maybe I'll hook up a deal with Sierra Nevada, and that's what the record company is trying to do right now. The beer is called Black Label so the stuff is going to have to look like fuckin oil.

Micha Kite

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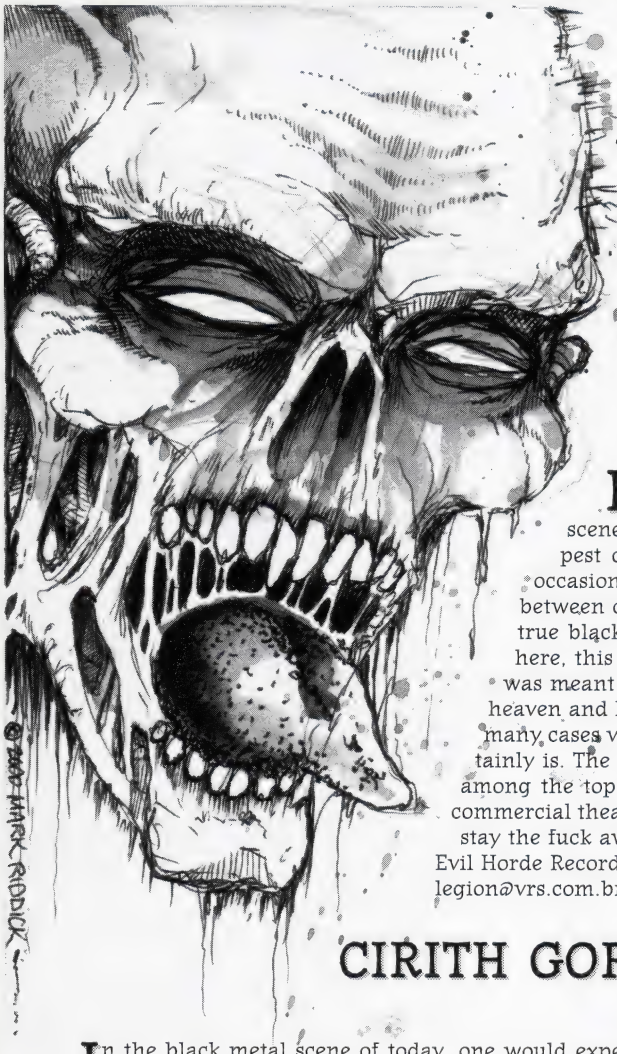


MUSIC REVIEWS

AZAGHAL

– The Nine Circles of Hell

– Evil Horde Records

Black terror metal!! **AZAGHAL** play a vicious and straight forward style of true hateful black metal. Reigning from Finland, **AZAGHAL** is now terrorizing the underground scenes of the globe with their unhallowed release *The Nine Circles of Hell*. A blasting tempest of unholy darkness, combined with fast paced, scathing screams, underlined by the occasional low ended bellows. The only thing I can compare it to off the top of my head is a mix between old ABIGOR and a hint of MUTIILATION. C.O.F. and DIMMU faggots be warned, this is true black metal for the black elite. There are no prissy bitch vocals or homosexual keyboards here, this is black metal tore down to the roots and executed the way it was meant to be, cold and pure! This album has a very clear apocalyptic heaven and hell theme that is somewhat typical within black metal, yet in many cases very captivating if done intelligently, as in this case it most certainly is. The Finnish underground fails to disappoint, and **AZAGHAL** ranks among the top of there scene today! If you desire true black metal without commercial theatrics or any other weak aspects then this band is for you. If not stay the fuck away! – **Kyle Spanswick**

Evil Horde Records: PO Box 4912, Curtiba - PR 82530-970, Brazil email: blacklegion@vrs.com.br

CIRITH GORGOR

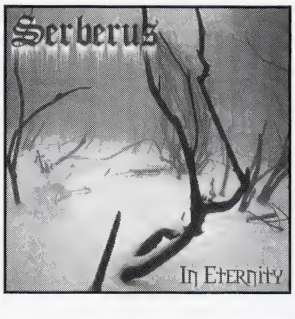
– Onwards to the Spectral Defile

– Osmose Productions

In the black metal scene of today, one would expect, upon the outset of an album to hear a keyboard introduction, however this album begins with an onslaught of speed and sickness. Throughout the entire album speed seems to be a key factor, and ties all aspects of this album together seamlessly. In a scene where electronic influences have become a major and an all too common part of the music, **CIRITH GORGOR** have refused to take part in the nonsense. With an almost entire lack of even keyboard involvement, **CIRITH GORGOR** have returned to a once forgotten realm of black metal, where the main ideologies of darkness and evil reign unscathed by the frauds of today. The melodic aspects of this album, however, are a welcome and perfect complement to the sickness contained within. With excellent production, vocals and musicianship this album is a must for fans of old NAGELFAR from Germany, DISSECTION, and perhaps even older GOD DETHRONED. **CIRITH GORGOR** will undoubtedly gain the respect and admiration of those souls truly devoted to the spirit of underground black metal. – **Karl Deiotte**

Osmose Productions: BP 57, 62990 Beaurainville, France web: www.osmoseproductions.com

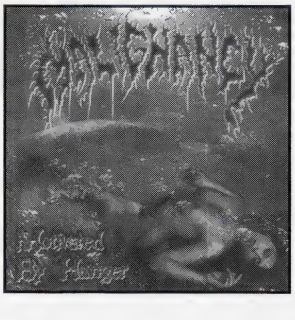
SERBERUS – *In Eternity* – Independent Release



SERBERUS (pronounced Sir-bur-us) describes their sound as "aggressive, melodic death metal," and they do successfully and satisfyingly blend elements of death, black, and power metal into a very captivating and entertaining mix. Guitarist Dave Otero (who trades off lead vocal duties with fellow guitarist Ivan Alcala) has a particularly scary voice, and is featured on "Ancient Throne" and "Gates Of Fire." (Be sure to check out a super-sick, live version of "Throne"—a bonus track on this CD.) Corey Melanson's rapid-fire drum attack, and Aaron Meacham's tasty bass licks complete the line-up. (Interestingly, Melanson and Meacham pen the band's dark lyrics, not the singers.) Here's a tip to bands looking to record: Otero has a studio in Colorado, and did an superb job engineering this recording. Overall excellent sound and packaging; a solid debut effort. – **Jon "K" Konjoyan**

SERBERUS: 3550 Everett Dr., Boulder, CO 80303 USA web: www.serberus.com

MALIGNANCY – *Motivated By Hunger* – United Guttural Records

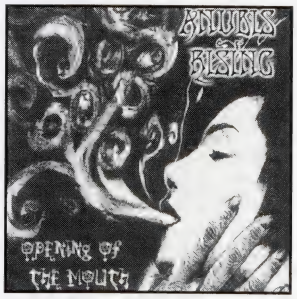


Looking for some blistering, ferocious sickness? Look no further, **MALIGNANCY** delivers the goods with their latest offering! One of the few bands in the death metal genre who is determined to formulate and keep their own style. Props should be given to them just for that, since most of you already know the scene is starting to become stagnant with bands that can't seem to think up an original musical idea. No lame rip offs here!

This EP includes five new songs and one live track. The title track is one of my favorites. I really dig the sample in the beginning. How can you go wrong with someone getting eaten alive by a shark? Very tight, insanely complex song structures with no let up in the intensity, make for some very insane brutality. Not enough credit is given to the musicians in this band. Not too many people can keep up with, never mind comprehend, the immense talent and technicality in **MALIGNANCY**'s music. The lyrics, of course, show that once again **MALIGNANCY** is far above the rest of the pack as far as intelligence goes. The live track has pretty good sound quality being that it was culled off of a home video. All in all, an extremely solid effort form a band who can teach everyone what it means to be brutal. – **Elaine Rawlings** **MALIGNANCY**: 86 Ridge Rd, Yonkers, NY 10705 USA web: www.malignancy.com

ALCHEMIST – *Organasm* – Displeased Records

Easily for fans of older TIAMAT circa, *Of The Clouds* or *Astral Sleep*, will dig this. The fun doesn't stop there kids. **ALCHEMIST** make their dreamy music a bit harder for those people who like to hurt things. Very clever guitars make the CD interesting, not really a CD you put on to pretend you're in *Dune* or anything. Lyrically, it looks like they're taking a more mental exploration / development format. Ya dig? Songs like: " Tide In, Mind Out" "New Beginning" and of course the entire "Evolution Trilogy", sort of gives you an idea what these Australians are into. A nice break from the norm, there isn't any satan, no killing, no masturbating with the infected vaginal secretion like a lot of other bands out there. Good job boys! If you're into TIAMAT, NEUROSIS, or even some gothic stuff, look into **ALCHEMIST**. Go to their website or call Displeased, they have friendly phone operators standing by. – **Jim Mills**
Displeased Records: Ronde Tocht 7d, NL-1507 CC, Zaandam, Holland web: www.displeased.nl



ANUBIS RISING – *Opening Of The Mouth* – Demoncore Records

What a pleasant little surprise! More doom and gloom for the masses. Another surprise is the superstars in the band! To my surprise I see that Slim Shady and Kerry King are in the band. Very odd mixture to say the least. Anyway, **ANUBIS** have some sort of bug in them that allows them to write catchy songs. Over all the band plays a hybrid of an unsettling NEUROSIS feel, with some darker death metal elements to it, and with the forefront of doom. The main vocals remind me a lot of AUTOPSY, not lyrically, but the feel and harshness. The guitars are lead by Dead (Kerry), and Sacha (Slim). They have put forth some great memorable riffs that flow really well, and stick in your mind for hours after you turn off the stereo, and you're excited when you come back to listen again. Not a whole lot of boom behind them, but I don't think that's what they were intending. **ANUBIS** definitely fall into their own category, having some interesting concepts both musically and lyrically. If you like anything that creates a atmosphere, but not done symphonically, this is for you. Raw metal in it's purest form. Also I was kidding about Kerry King and Slim Shady – **Jim Mills** email: anubis_rising@yahoo.com web: www.mp3.com/anubisrising

ATROX – *Contentum* – Season of Mist

ATROX is one of the weirdest things that I have come across in a long time. To me, it's like a dream that doesn't make any sense at all, something that makes you think about it through the entire day, wondering what it was all about, but you liked it. **ATROX** basically paints this picture, a big huge canvas, with multiple pieces combined together. None of which go together, and some of them are quite disturbing. You're thinking "What the hell?" The CD takes you through 12 different experiences, each very different in their own right, but all of them are great. The abstract vocals of this amazing singer are a step above anything else out there in this area of music. It's seriously a chore to even go about describing the vocals. Very elegant and pretty. At times it's more chaotic than extreme metal, but it's all beautiful. From little girl screeching, to a giddy little laughter, to full on dreamwaves (yes I know that's not a word) of musical joy. Music wise it's very much gothrock, but not too fruity. Sometimes they have some killer drumming going on, which typically gothrock does not have. Very long a drawn out and songs, with somewhat of a progressive structure. Slow, doomy, atmospheric music, seriously intended to drive you crazy. If there was a soundtrack for insanity, this would be it. – **Jim Mills** Season Of Mist: 24, rue Brandis, Marseille, France 13005 web: www.season-of-mist.com

THE BLACK LEAGUE – *Ichor* – Spinefarm

THE BLACK LEAGUE knows how to write very catchy, memorable songs, and that alone is a reason to get this CD. Let alone any fan that is into any sort of Goth rock band, or more specifically DEAD CAN DANCE, BABYLON WHORES, TENEBRE or even older DANZIG. You will appreciate this album; It will spend a lot of time in your CD player.
Each song on this CD doesn't resemble any other song on the CD. You know what this means? You'll end up listening to it again and again. Luckily the CD runs about 58 minutes, so it's not too tedious. The nature of the album is more inclined with a goth/death rock crowd. Songs that stick out in my mind are "Deep Waters", which has almost a DANZIG vibe to it, maybe the feel of the songs "Killer Wolf" or "Blood and Tears". Another song that stands out is "Blood of the Gods." It's a very violent song ranging in different speeds, and busy drum work, as well us a very unstable vocals. Those aren't the only good songs, all of the songs are good, even the intro is catchy. THE BLACK LEAGUE are a good band, who has recorded a great CD, and even has great packaging! If you like this style of music, or just good music in general, you should order it from Spinefarm soon. – **Jim Mills** Spinefarm: PO Box 212, Helsinki, Finland 00181

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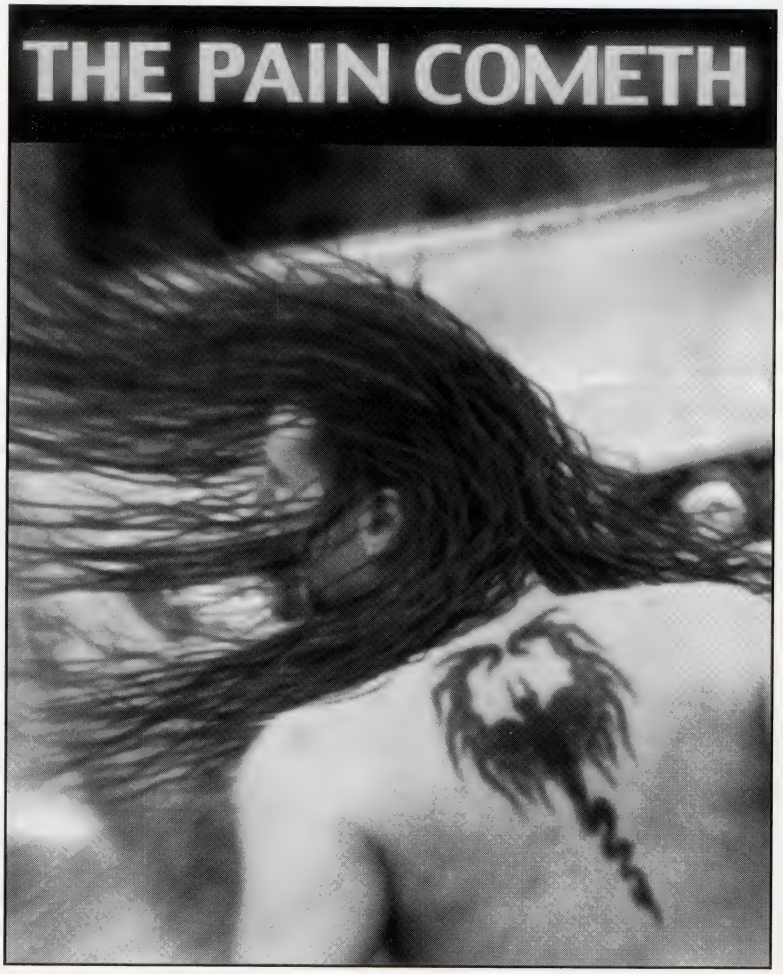


BLOOD RED THRONE – *Deathmix 2000* – Independent Release

BLOOD RED THRONE is the latest creation of Tchort (Ex-EMPEROR, DODHEIMSGARD). Though these guys are adorned with the faces of the dead this is not black metal, and this is a good thing in Tchort's case seeing as his last few contributions to the black metal scene were less than impressive. **BLOOD RED THRONE** is full on death assault and overall is pretty well done. The album title brings to mind some kind of faggot techno/dance shit, but I will be kind enough to let that go for now. The first song "Ravenous War Machine" didn't floor me, but it had it's moments. From the second song on it just gets better and better, straight forward technical death somewhat reminiscent of MYRKSKOG or maybe a souped-up NECROPHOBIC. It's good to see such a revival in this style of death metal with more and more bands doing something other then the gore-groove shit that has spread like a plague throughout the scene. I must say that upon first listen I was expecting something a little bit darker from these black metal veterans, but, as was said earlier, overall it is a decent death metal release in a scene where there are few and far between, making it that much more appealing. – **Kyle Spanswick**

BLOOD RED THRONE: Korvettveien 61 G, 4624 Kristiansand S, Norway web: www.bloodredthrone.com

CARPATHIAN FOREST – *Strange Old Brew* – Avantgarde Music

I'm not exactly sure where to start with this one. First off let me say that I have been a devoted **CARPATHIAN** fan for some time now, with releases such as *Through Chasm Cave and Titan Wood* and *Bloodlust and Perversion* how could you not? **CARPATHIAN** has been one of the most cult acts in black metal, virtually legendary. Now I'm afraid that has all come to an end, joining the ranks of the fallen. My first apprehensions came upon hearing the seven inch picture disk release, but I'll leave that for later. My next apprehension came upon hearing the album title, yet I dared to venture further. The album actually starts off pleasing, maybe a little overboard on production for a band such as this, but still obtaining a sound similar to *Black Shining Leather*. The album then takes a turn on the fourth song "Martyr/Sacrificulum" sounding more like a Bethlehem song, riff wise, yet that wasn't the bad part, just unexpected. Then I dared onward and the album slowly deteriorated, floating somewhere between that CELTIC FROST sound (not a bad thing at all and very typical of C.F.) and something more upbeat, bordering a rock and roll vibe, all darkness diminishing rapidly. The seventh song "House of the Whipcord" actually has a fucking saxophone solo, giving a new spin to the term BLACK metal! I think the last two tracks were the nail in the coffin, the first of which is an ambient piece accompanied by the sounds of someone getting liquid shot up there ass titled "The Good Old Enema Treatment". I feel this would have been a more fitting album title seeing it captures the essence of a gay mans asshole. The latter of the two "He's turning Blue", was featured on the picture disk along with a MAYHEM cover, is a song that will make you want to get up and dance around like a fucking fag largely due to a chorus that you would expect to find in some slap happy punk rock anthem. If you took this album and chopped it in two discarding the second half *Strange Old Brew* would be a halfway decent release. My only hope is that they lay this band to rest before it gets out of hand. – **Kyle Spanswick**

Avantgarde Music: Via De Amicis 4, 20123 Milano, Italy web: www.avantgardemusic.com

DROWNING MAN – *Rock And Roll Killing Machine* – Revelation Records

I had the chance to check this band out with DILLINGER ESCAPE PLAN this past winter, and I must say they did not disappoint in the live setting. I was eager to check out their CD and now here it is. Apparently, this band went through some hell during the recording of this disc, but the effort was well worth it. Do not write this band off as simply another clone in the over saturated hardcore scene!

Most of the music is straight forward with some interesting and complex melodies thrown in for good measure. While they do have the sound of much of the newer hardcore bands of today, **DROWNING MAN** has used the intensity of these bands and made it into their own sound. They have layered their sound with the melodic parts which so many bands seem afraid to add to their music for fear of turning off the more "underground" crowd. It is nice to see a band who seems like they make the music they want to hear instead of what everybody else wants. This band seems to have what it takes to give them the edge over much of their competition. Like I said they do have some obvious influences, but their sound is different enough to make listening to them worthwhile. – **Elaine Rawlings**

Revelation Records: PO Box 5232, Huntington Beach, CA 92615 USA web: www.revelationrecords.com

EXTOL – *Undeceived* – Solidstate Records

If you're unfamiliar with **EXTOL**, let me give you a run down on the band, then on to the CD. These guys are coming out of Norway, and no they're not on Moonfog or Nuclearblast. They're on a Swedish label called Black Sun. You don't remember Black Sun? They gave us AT THE GATES, CROWN OF THORNS, IMPIOUS, SACRILEGE. So, you can already gather what style of music **EXTOL** plays. Over here in America they're signed to a small indy label called Solidstate. **EXTOL** also has two other releases before *Undeceived*, *Burial* and the EP *Mesmerized*. Both of which are musically the same, and all available through Solidstate. I would suggest going to the website above to learn more about these metal maniacs. *Undeceived* is a step up from anything **EXTOL** have done. Through the entire CD there is a lot to listen to 12 songs, and some of them, well most of them are pretty lengthy. The band plays a hybrid of black metal and death metal. Vocals are more inclined with the black metal fans, but have a little more power added to them, not as screechy and whiny. The vocals are very up front in the mix, helping the flow of the music. Musically, it's a little different from a lot of bands out there. It reminds me of ATHEIST in some parts. Very odd timing, obscure structure, but of course, it works. It has a bunch of different guitar changes, making the music more interesting, keeping your attention through each song. Slow dirge parts then very fast violent parts. Of course the drum quality is mixed very well into the recording, and during the audible slaughter, you need a great drum sound, or it sounds like mud! Basically, if you're into metal that is extreme, you should order *Undeceived*, you'll thank yourself later. No, they don't sing about a satanic goat, or masturbating with the entrails of a dead pig. – **Jim Mills**

Solidstate Records: PO Box 12698, Seattle, WA 98111 USA web: www.durling.com/endtime

GRIEF OF EMERALD – *Malformed Seed* – Listenable Records

Well, it's black metal. It doesn't stray to far off from the likes of DIMMU BORGIR. It's very symphonic, and is heavily laced with keyboards. Which isn't bad necessarily, but it has been done before again and again. Maybe it's me, but black metal is way too saturated, and there are way too many bands out there. The scene is killing itself. Especially, anything that has to do with Christianity. Bands are using that as a selling point for their music, or lack there of. For example the song "Holy Book, Holy Shit." I am very curious to know what this song is about. It holds a lot of room to use your imagination. The name is just a tease of what the real meaning of the song is about. I think I wrote a song called that when I was about 14 years old and in the 10th grade. The band pictures are a bit, how do you say in English, fucking retarded. The corpse paint is over done, but I think people need to quit posing as Jesus in their promo shots. No one is impressed but your band mates, i.e.; CROWN OF THORNS in the picture, fake red elongated nails, fake blood, and the ever so famous brutal glare. Don't even bother, you're not so brutal when you're working at Blockbuster Video wearing a blue blazer.

GRIEF OF EMERALD I was told was pretty good. I guess my expectations were a bit too high. *Malformed Seed* didn't do anything for me. It seems typical run of the mill metal. Not a lot of creativity went into it. If you like symphonic, black metal, you should pick this CD up. You will like it, and you will probably listen to it with candles burning in your room with the lights off, only to be interrupted when your mother calls you to dinner. – **Jim Mills**

Listenable Records: BP 73, Wimereux, France 62930

IMMORTAL CRINGE – *Undying Fear* – Independent Release

Another band to come out of the Rocky Mountain region, **IMMORTAL CRINGE** has put out their second CD, *Undying Fear*. This CD isn't too bad, the music is kind of a mix of thrash and newer metal. It seems like these guys are trying to do something original, but they definitely need to get some more experience under their belts. This is actually a pretty good CD from this band. I'm not sure how much playing out they have had, but practice and time will make these guys strong contenders in their respective scene. The only complaint I really have is with the vocals. They do not mix all that well, making the songs seem a little choppy, but again, experience should make that change.

The artwork for this CD is not too bad, a little cartoonish, but it's nice to see something other than gore portrayed. On to the lyrics, they are, as you might expect, a little silly too. Song titles like "Drunken Guy" remind me of gay eighties glam bands, fortunately this is not a running theme on this CD. Time and effort can go a long way and if this band focuses on their songwriting abilities, they will get much better. My advice for this band would be to throw out all their old songs and start fresh, without listening to anyone else so they will not copy anyone's style. That would give them a much greater advantage over their peers. – **Elaine Rawlings** **IMMORTAL CRINGE**: PO Box 211629, Denver, CO 80221 USA web: www.immortalcringe.com

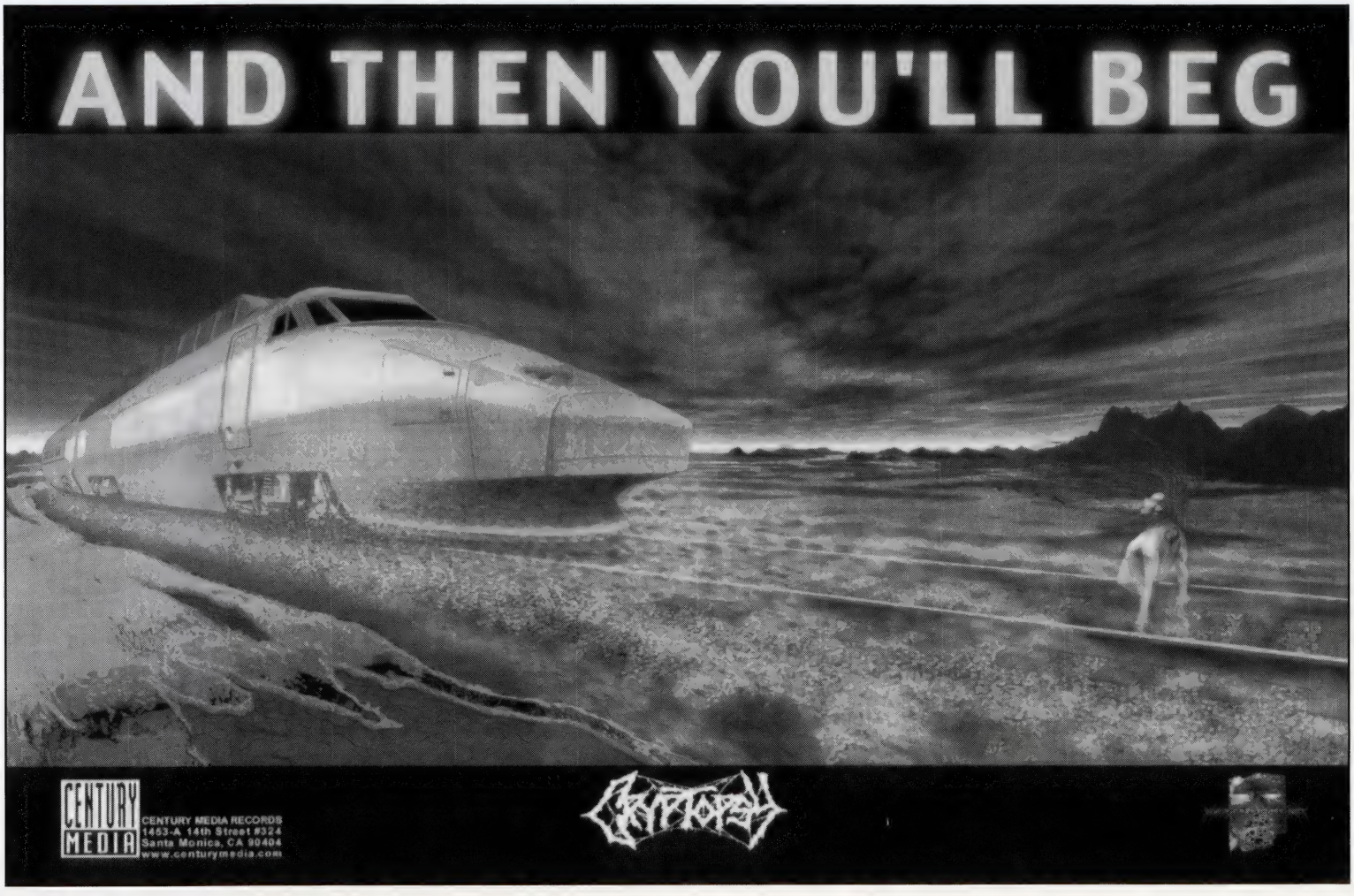
LORD WIND – *Heralds of Fight* – No Colours Records

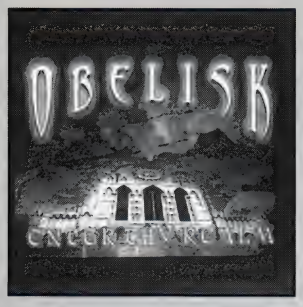
For those who may be less enlightened, **LORD WIND** is the creation of Darken, the solitary driving force behind the legendary GRAVELAND. **LORD WIND** is epic pagan atmosphere for the European elite.It is not black metal, but ancient ancestral war hymns of a proud time past. For those already familiar with the first release *Forgotten Songs, Heralds of Fight* is somewhat of a dramatic change. It is by far cleaner and clearer, has less of a pagan campfire feel and more of a gloriously epic pagan war feel. It is more comparable to a motion picture soundtrack, such as the *Conan the Barbarian* soundtrack, yet more paganistic! There are nine tracks on this release, all memorable in their own right. The devoted German/Polish black metal follower will recognize one hymn in particular, track four entitled "Mystery", a revamped version featured in the opening of NARGAROTH's *Herbstleyd*, a song that will fill your heart with pride and raise a cry for war! *Heralds of Fight* is a mighty achievement and powerful progression for Darken and all that have faith in his cause and shall become legendary as time buries all in dust! Awaken warriors, for you have been summoned in the name of **LORD WIND**! Ride to victory! – **Kyle Spanswick**
LORD WIND: c/o Darken, PO Box 1775, 50/385, Wroclaw 46, Poland email: eastclan@hotmail.com

MUSHMOUTH – *Lift The Curse* – Triple Crown Records

MUSHMOUTH is a band I have heard of, but I've never actually listened to their music until this release on Triple Crown. Pretty typical hardcore is what is being done here. A little bit of rap thrown in for good measure. It seems a lot of the hardcore bands these days are following the same formula. This is not to say that **MUSHMOUTH** should be written off or that they are not talented. This is an pretty strong effort from this band. It is hard to really stand out in this scene. There are so many bands and not enough exposure for the ones who are actually doing something worthwhile.

These guys are definitely tight and have some decent songs. I like the lyrics, for the most part they are about the anger, hate, and despair of life. Like I said nothing way original or really out there but then there are too many bands trying to be DILLINGER ESCAPE PLAN too. This CD is for people who like very straight forward old school hard-core with a bit of metal and rap thrown in. A little reminiscent of bands like HATEBREED, this CD will do really well with the right promotion. – **Elaine Rawlings**
Triple Crown Records: 331 West 57th St PMB 472, New York, NY 10019 USA web: www.triplecrownrecords.com





OBELISK – *Enter Thy Realm* – Independent Release

California has spawned some amazing death metal bands including DEEDS OF FLESH, DISGORGE, VILE, and DEPRECATED. Now comes San Diego-based **OBELISK** a well-kept secret for too long. For the sound of sheer pounding brutality, plus vocals that alternate from ear-splattering screams to hellish growls, order this CD now. You will be rewarded with nine songs of absolute terror, plus complete lyrics and digital artwork.

Guitarist/bassist Mason Gregory also recorded, produced and mastered the project with MORTUUS TERROR's Ed Talorda (keep an a ear out for MORTUUS TERROR, too). Listening to the CD is made all the more bizarre by the recent passing of vocalist Paul Runge. (**OBELISK** is currently seeking a replacement.) Luckily, we have this recording, and Runge will live-on forever in the music. – **Jon "K" Konjoyan**

OBELISK: 11742 Lakeside Ave., Lakeside, CA 92040 USA web: www. legionofobelisk.com

POWER SYMPHONY – *Lightbringer* – Pavement Music

Following up the hard-to-find *Evillot*, **POWER SYMPHONY**'s latest release, *Lightbringer*, weaves a spell of power metal, laced with epic trappings. Combining sources as varied as WARLOCK's female lead (Doro), HAMMERFALL's epic qualities, RHAPSODY's propensity for orchestrations and classical structures, and the lyrical interest of bands such as BLIND GUARDIAN and ICED EARTH, **POWER SYMPHONY** establishes a power metal foundation, and builds upon it with gothic-driven lyrics, an effective guitar sound sweetened with keyboards and other effects, and truly inspired harmonies and melodies.

Produced by Joey Vera (ARMORED SAINT and FATES WARNING), the album begins with the bone-crunching "The Way of the Sword," which in turn leads to the heavy-breathing, very sexy "Lucifer" (the lyrics even cite Descartes!). Listening to cat-like vocalist Michela D'Orlando gush out the lyrics, however, makes me think the track should have been titled "Lillith." Other standouts include "Gethsemane," "Song of Men" (this one sounds like something out of BLACKMORE'S NIGHT), and the haunting instrumental "The Necromancer." This final track supposedly ends after only two minutes, but there is an almost eleven-minute gap, which is followed by an interesting coda (which begins at a whisper approximately 12:57 into the song).

If the band has a weakness, it is in the rhythm section. Drummer Lino Sistu keeps things interesting, but bassist Fabio Iaonnone rarely heard. The guitar work Marco Cecconi is excellent, but Marco Volpe's keyboards at times drown out some of the harmonies. In addition to the melodic underpinnings and lyrical content, the true gem of this band is D'Orlando, whose sultry pipes kept me listening until the album came to a close. – **Octavio Ramos Jr.**

Pavement Music: PO Box 50550, Phoenix, AZ 85076 USA web: www.pavementmusic.com web: www.powersymphony.com

PRIMITIVE BRUTALITY – *Ten Years* – Primitive Recordings

This CD is a culmination of solo material written over the last ten years by, Roger J Beaujard. He is the guitarist/drum programmer for MORTICIAN, and the drummer for MALIGNACY for those of you who don't know. Roger handles everything on this album, including the vocals. Some of this music predates MORTICIAN, so you can definitely see where a lot of their direction came from.

The CD starts off with the most recently recorded material and finishes with the older stuff. It's nice to see a lot of people now a days are able to put out CD's without needing a whole band to do so. Most of the drums on here are of course programmed but, there is a session drummer for some of the tracks. Although, I prefer a live drummer, the drums on here do not sound mechanical except in really obvious parts. I really like his vocals a lot actually. It's almost like taking the best elements of MORTICIAN's music and putting down some legible vocals. His vocals are extremely low and sick, but they are not completely unintelligible. There is actually a lot more harmony within this stuff then there probably ever will be with MORTICIAN. He does make use of sick blasts and crazy samples, but Roger has added the element of contrast which makes this album that much heavier. – **Elaine Rawlings**

Primitive Recordings: 73 Glade Dr, Long Pond, PA 18334 USA web: www.primitiverecordings.com

PROPHECY – *Foretold. Foreseen* – Corpse Gristle Records

Well, this CD doesn't compare to the band live. Luckily, I got to see them at the Texas Metal Fest last year. What I liked about the band is, it has the same sort of horror that death metal possessed back in the day. The vocals seem to be pretty run of the mill on the recording. But he's got a lot of texture behind them, and hopefully he's not cupping the microphone, because that's the cheaters way of doing these style of vocals.

Musically it's great. It has a bunch of the newer death metal styling, very slow half time, "moshy?" parts. Very nice for some dramatics. The tempo changes keep you following the music, not making you feel like you're listening to CANCER or something. The songs are a bit lengthy, around six minutes on average. So, all you low attention span metal fiends are going to go crazy, but all you dual black metal and death metal fans will be into this a bunch. Lyrically it's nothing new. I think every garage band has written a song about "Feasting on Flesh" at some point in their short lived career. I would say that song is the best on this CD. The another memorable song is "Inner Reality." It has a huge NAPALM DEATH feel. Very catchy guitars, and an equally cool vocal pattern. If you're into death metal, write Corpse Gristle or whatever, and tell them I sent you. You'll give me your first born later. – **Jim Mills**

Corpse Gristle Records: 3521 Oak Lawn Ave. Ste# 666 Dallas, TX 75219 USA web: www.corpsegristle.com

SINISTER CREED – *Divine Lies* – Independent Release

Mixing everything from thrash to death metal to the occasional melodic black metal influence, this bass laden debut album from Colorado Springs' **SINISTER CREED** is definitely worth checking out. With intense overdubbed vocals and excellent musicianship, Divine Lies rises above not only the Colorado scene, but above most other bands that attempt this nearly forgotten style of mid-paced death metal. Combining the influences of early SLAYER and perhaps even some early DEATH, **SINISTER CREED** creates a sound wholly unique in today's drab death scene of DYING FETUS rip-offs. Surprisingly, this mixture, in the hands of **SINISTER CREED**, creates an almost triumphant sounding death metal album, yet at the same time retains its brutality and originality. Coming to a climax at nearly the final song, "When We as Gods" explores the realm of stringed instruments in its intro and is definitely, lyrically and musically, the defining song of the album. One of the very few remaining bands in this vein of death metal, **SINISTER CREED** has taken the genre to a new level. – **Karl Deiotte**

SINISTER CREED: 4499 Fortune Circle S. Colorado Springs, CO 80917 USA web: www.sinistercreed.com

T.R.U.T.H. – *Devoid Of Life* – Independent Release

This is Wyoming based, **T.R.U.T.H.**'s second CD, and there is a definite maturation from the first album *Deadspeak*. The songs are tighter overall, and it seems like they are coming into their own as far as developing their own style. Many diverse influences can be heard throughout. **T.R.U.T.H.** mixes sounds like that of IN FLAMES to MADBALL, insuring that you probably won't get bored with any of the songs on here.

For the most part the music has the IN FLAMES feel while the vocals are akin to HATEBREED with some pretty sick screams thrown in. There are a few parts where it doesn't quite come together, but this is something I think they will work out in time. So for those of you who have a pretty open mind about metal, you should check out **T.R.U.T.H.** – **Elaine Rawlings**

T.R.U.T.H.: 903 Custer, Cheyenne, WY 82009 USA web: www.truthwy.com

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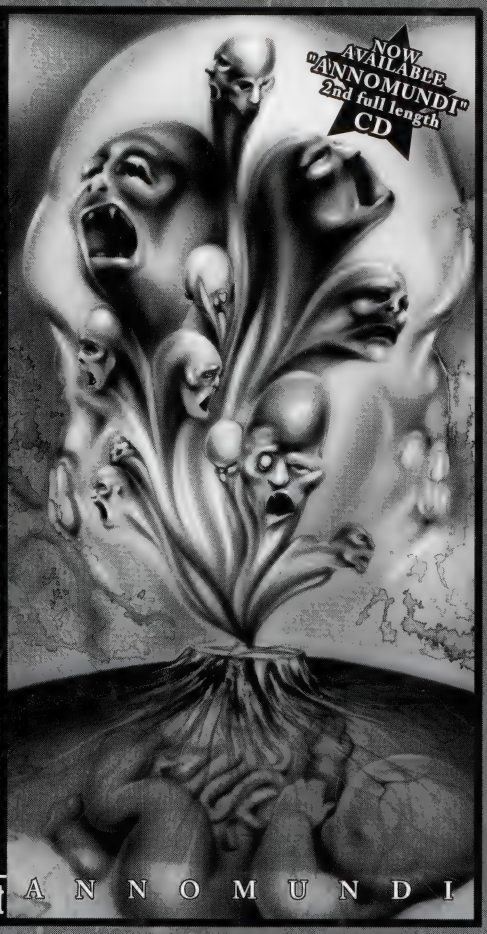

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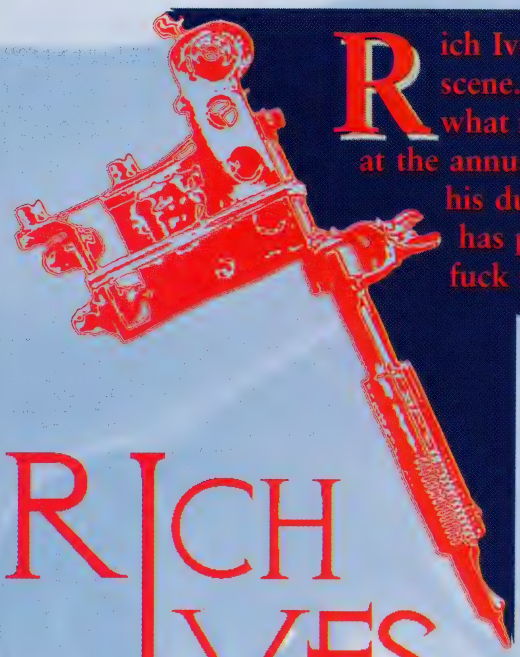

Rich Ives has been up and coming for some time now within the tattooing scene. After years of competing and multiple awards he has finally achieved what is rightfully his, winning sixteen awards and best tattooist of the year at the annual National Tattoo Association convention. He has strived and paid his dues now it's his time. Thorough work and an exceonal talent for art has put him at the top among the best in the world. I contacted this sick fuck to gain a deeper perspective on his works and achievements.

RICH IVES

STEEL CITY TATTOO

Pit: When did you first know that you wanted to tattoo?

Rich Ives: I tattooed as a kid, actually. I tattooed from about the age of thirteen to about fifteen or sixteen, then I quit. My father died when I was about seventeen, right before I turned eighteen, matter of fact. So, I went to college and worked on an art degree, got a degree, did a little graphic design, a little illustration, things like that; worked for a radio show. Don Miller, who was originally with CNN for a while, but I found I got ripped off so many times, as a free-lancer, that I was discouraged as hell. So, I went to visit my friends at a tattoo shop, boom. History. They didn't charge me an apprenticeship fee. I had a nice portfolio, so they wanted me to do some work. So I was tattooing for two weeks and it had been non-stop ever since.

What inspires you when you work?

That's a multifaceted answer you're gonna get. It depends. It depends on how creative the person that's getting the work is, or how creative their ideas are. It depends because everyone is different. The least inspiring tattoos are the ones people get because they want to be trendy or cool. Unfortunately, it won't be cool in a few years unless it's something that means a lot to them.

You have done some pretty wicked shit. Would you say the darker pieces are you favorite pieces?

If I'm in a dark fuckin' mood, hell yeah! It depends on the person. I've got a kid now that's getting from knees, to neck, to elbows, getting a full body cathedral; really quite dark and cryptic. It's got a dead pope and an angel in bondage. He's won quite a few awards now, so that's really fun. Of course, he was brought up religiously so, of course, he's going to rebel at one point or another; get tired of the bureaucratic bullshit involved, so that's why he's getting it. As long as it's not so distasteful, and as long as you can get your message across.

I understand you just won some awards. Can you tell us about that?

The National Tattoo Association has a convention once a year. To my knowledge, it gathers the most countries. This year it had upwards of seventeen to twenty countries. This is where the best of the best in the world come to compete. France usually sends in some of the most incredible work you ever did see. Paul Booth is always there, he doesn't necessarily compete, he is more in to his tours. He used to compete quite heavily. This year I won the best tattoo artist and the international show. I won sixteen awards, which I believe is the current world record of the number of awards won at one show, or for that particular show, at least. I've been going after the best tattooist spot for about five years now. I was beaten by a guy from Japan, beaten by a guy from France, one from Indianapolis, now I finally got it.

Does music play an important part in your life?

Oh yeah! And this type of music, actually, more now than ever. I had long hair up until about two years ago when I sliced it; thought I'd be normal. But as soon as I did that I wanted to hear more. I think it was about when Wendy sent me a sampler and it had BOLT THROWER on it, and I just freaked, I had forgotten all that stuff. Since then, I've been buying stuff left and right. The guy that owns the studio doesn't appreciate listening to that kind of music most of the time. I have other stuff. I have "fru-fru" stuff there, too. We have stuff from Sinatra to Skinlab.

Your work is great album cover material. Ever thought about doing that?

I would love to, but unfortunately, it's hard to get a lot of money out of people for what I would have to charge. The time factor is also a real pain in the ass. I'm asked all the time to do stuff, from album covers to drum heads, but my time is so tied up in projects, unless someone was willing to pay, not too much, but normal prices, and most people can't do that. I have guys all the time wanting me to do their drumheads or something like that with a wicked air brush and I'd go to do it and they would say, "Hey I'll get you a six pack or something." It just doesn't work, not when you're that busy. I've got people coming out now from England, so I stay busy.

What takes up your time when you're not tattooing?

Actually, right now, I'm doing a whole series of portraits; more main stream black and gray oil; real wild, almost like an old photograph. They're getting really popular, so I do about one of those a month. It takes me approximately twenty-two hours. I'm going to start some real nasty paintings here soon. Now that I have that title I don't have to compete as much. I don't go on tour like a lot of them do, just because I don't own so many studios. I guess if I had a lot of studios or other revenue, I might go on tour. Right now there is no reason to. Although, I've been getting a lot of calls, on a weekly basis, from people that have seen the magazines, saying stuff like, "I don't want to travel all the way to see you but, when are you coming to New York?" I got invited to Australia for 2001 and the New York show and I have a place to stay. As long as I have a room and board, might as well enjoy it.

Any final words?

Yeah, SINISTER CREED's new CD just came out and I've known those guys since 1985; since I was a little tyke. So, if anyone wants some power-ass music, man, check it out. These guys have been around long enough to get their shit together; it's awesome. Plus they mentioned my religion... Foodism. It takes a while to explain it, but since it's now printed in their CD cover, it is now officially a religion. Viva La Food!

Kyle Spanswick

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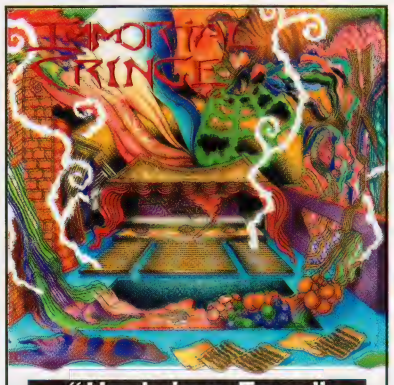

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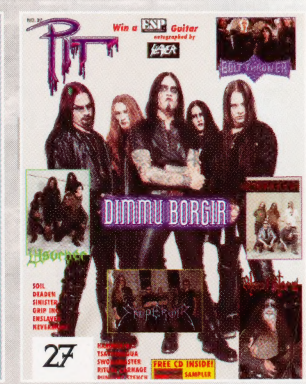

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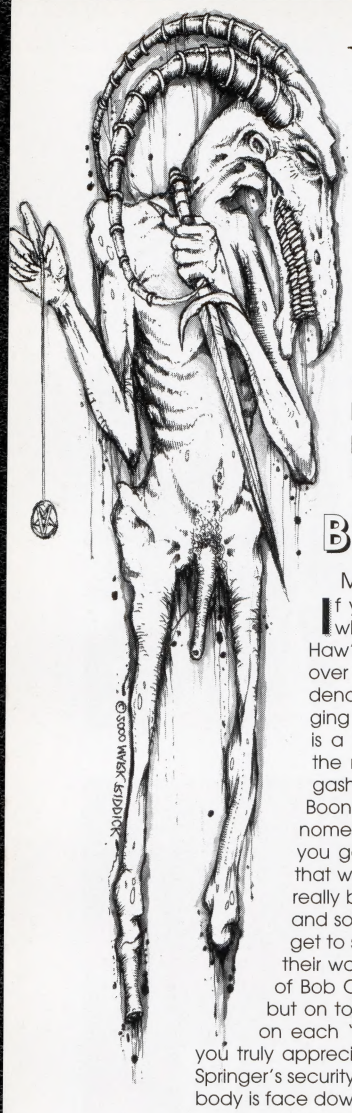


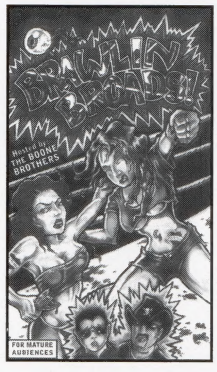
MOVIE REVIEWS

Dave Bone

Back from the dead! Here we are again to bring more gore, horror and sickness across the nation, cracking the vaults of the underground to resurrect films for die-hard fans. In continuing with their line of Lucio Fulci comic adaptations, Blackest Heart Media (www.blackestheart.com) has released the visually amazing ZOMBIE graphic novel, complete with an extensive soundtrack. This is a huge step for them from the BEYOND release, and is only the beginning of their new standard for such products. They are also planning adaptations of THE GATES OF HELL, HOUSE BY THE CEMETERY, and a new PHANTASM graphic novel written by creator Don Coscarelli. "The funeral is about to begin..."

BRAWLIN' BROADS

Mayhem Productions



If you grew up at laughing at those white trash dumb fucks on "Hee-Haw", then you'll love this ridiculously over the top peak into society's lowest denominators, duking it out for bragging rights in world where eating dinner is a bragging right. Hosted by two of the most fun lovin', drunk and stoned gash hounds you'll ever encounter, the Boone brothers are truly a cultural phenomenon unto themselves. Not only do you get to see those sad pieces of shit that waitress at Quincy's off the highway really beat the crap out of (tops optional and sometimes accidental), but you also get to see the brothers booze and smoke their way through the best fucked up commentary this side of Bob Costas and Frank Albert. So that should be enough, but on top of all that you get hilariously professional statistics on each "contender" and background information to make you truly appreciate the depressing stakes of each fight. Fuck Jerry Springer's security guards, these guys don't stop the action until somebody is face down!

MURDER SECRET

Shocking Images

This film was "supervised" by Lucio Fulci, and that would have been a good thing in his heyday but unfortunately this is victim to late the 80's Fulci / Italian horror influence that makes the film only bearable. A family has planned to reunite with their aunt who has been locked up in an insane asylum for thirty years. However, she is not there when the family arrives so a shady caretaker receives them and makes clear that they are not to open one particular door in the house. Well, if you couldn't have guessed, people start dropping off in pretty gory ways, and this is where the film saves itself; the small boy of the family gets decapitated with a chainsaw! Fuck yeah, only Italians have balls like that. You never see pre-pubescent kids get wacked in movies when those pussies at the MPAA in America have any say. So anyways, overall its kind of slow but has a couple moments and somewhat of a PSYCHO theme (at the end you get to see what's behind the door and it ain't pretty).

BLOODSTAINED BUTTERFLY

Shocking Images

A girl is killed in a park and the suspected killer is apprehended, but the body count goes up. The man accused is put through the ringer and his dirty laundry is waved out in the open. In standard Scooby Doo fashion, the film operates on the not-so-crafty-but-entertaining "switcheroo" philosophy that's usually impossible to figure out. Here is no exception, as the film makes interesting transitions on the perspective of guilt and what the suspected character's motivations there are. Mainly told through the courtroom trial and flashbacks, this giallo has a compelling story line that doesn't depend on the gore factor. Those smooth, old, Italians live it up throughout the film killing young girls, and trying to get in the sack with the ones still alive. I love Scooby, but these Italians really know how to treat a woman.

DAWN OF THE MUMMY

Shocking Images

Here's probably the only explicitly zombie/mummy crossover movie ever made. A mummy movie is usually completely different from a zombie one, but here the two come cross boundaries, creating a entertaining round up of the Egyptian undead. Some sleazy grave robbing hoodlums are interrupted by some even sleazier models (they don't have anything on Rick Martel) that bust in and start setting up and fucking photo shoot. The retarded filmmakers (god bless 'em) justify the mummies resurrection by the heat from the photo shoot's lights, which cook them alive?! So, the plot is completely terrible, but the film carries itself very well on sheer stupidity (I mean this to be a good thing) and then all hell breaks loose when the zombies wake up! The ensuing town rampage scene is not to be missed for gore fans. Throw out that piece of shit THE MUMMY with Brendan Frasier and pick this up.

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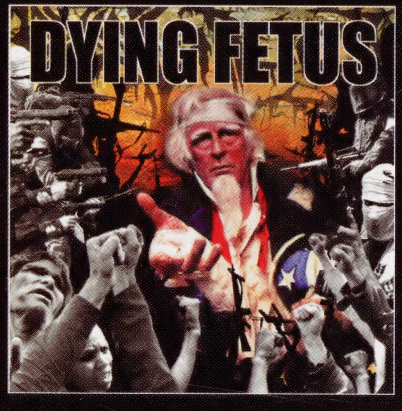

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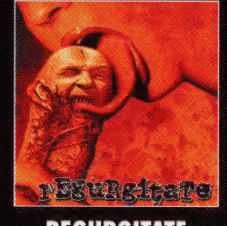

REGURGITATE
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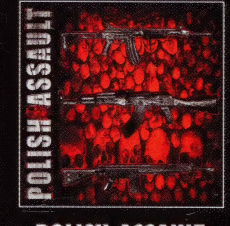
Bone-shattering splattergrind!



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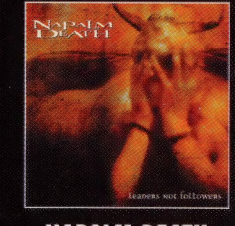
Various Artists CD $12
Crushing demos from YATTERING, LOST SOUL, DECAPITATED & DAMNABLE.



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